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John R. Caldwell

EPITOME

OF

Christian Experience

IN PSALM XXXII.

WITH THE

DEVELOPMENT OF CHRISTIAN LIFE.

BY

JOHN R. CALDWELL,

Author of "Things to Come," "Foundations of the Faith," etc.

With Photo and Brief Record of Life.

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FOREWORD.

"THINGS TO COME," the first volume from the pen of J.R.C., issued in 1875, was described by DONALD ROSS, then Editor of *The Witness*, as "an attempt to map out the Great Events of Unfulfilled Prophecy. For its conciseness, completeness, and trustworthiness we know nothing at all to be compared with it." To-day, after the test of forty years, it is classed by Dr. Torrey of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles, U.S.A., as one of "the best books on Prophecy."

At varying intervals from that time a series of special addresses on a book or theme would be given, notes taken, and remodelled into a volume, as "GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE," "CHRIST IN THE LEVITICAL OFFERINGS," "CHRIST IN HEBREWS;" or a series of Special Studies by the Editor would appear in *The Witness* and be reissued in book form as "FOUNDATIONS OF THE FAITH," "BECAUSE YE BELONG TO CHRIST," "SHADOWS OF CHRIST," and "THE GREAT MYSTERY." Sometimes addresses would be given as the basis, revised notes with additions appear in the magazine, to be again revised and finally issued in permanent form, as "FROM THE CROSS TO THE KINGDOM," "BECAUSE YE BELONG TO CHRIST," and doubly so with "THE CHARTER OF THE CHURCH," on which the Author devoted the greatest amount of study and attention. Various other booklets and innumerable papers flowed from his pen during his forty years of active ministry.

The "EPITOME OF CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE" is the last extended writing from the same pen, and his last duty and pleasure was to carefully revise these 162 pages for publication in book form.

A short account of the life of the author, with photograph in a favourite pose, is added to complete this Memorial Volume. HYP.

"WHOSE FAITH FOLLOW."

A Tribute to the Memory of J. R. CALDWELL.

"Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?" (Zech. 1. 5).

"Remember them, . . . whose faith follow. Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever" (Heb. 13. 7, 8).

KNOW, brethren, in homelands and ye far away,
That a prince and a great man is fallen to-day;
A pastor, a teacher of God's Holy Word,
A guide and a leader—a gift from the Lord.

A pillar of strength in God's temple was he,
Adorned with the beauty of true modesty.
He walked in the truth and the truth taught in love—
Well balanced in wisdom and grace from above.

The spirit of meekness, of love, and of might,
Illumined his soul as a bright burning light;
No narrowness, harshness, or stern party strife—
For "love to all saints" was his motto through life.

Like corn fully ripened, and mellowed by age,
He fell 'neath the scythe, and our loss who can gauge?
Now gathered and garnered, all golden and bright,
He rests with His Saviour in endless delight.

May that spirit be ours, of grace and of prayer,
His mantle, his girdle, may we ever wear.
Though dead, yet he speaks from his Heavenly place:
"I commend you to God, and the Word of His grace."

Oh! brother beloved, we bid thee "Farewell!"
Now go with thy Master for ever to dwell;
When the morning *reveille* calls the saints to the air,
We shall meet in His presence, all radiant and fair.

Kirkby-in-Furness. T. ROBINSON.

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"ONE THING."

THE following incident related by Mr. CALDWELL gives in a word the motive of his life and the aim of this volume.

MY dear old friend the late Wm. Lincoln used to print a little card every New Year's Day, and gave one to each attending his ministry. Once he gave me one of those cards. I will tell you what was on it:

> **"Lord Jesus, make Thyself to me**
> **A living, bright reality,**
> **More present to Faith's vision keen**
> **Than any earthly object seen;**
> **More dear, more intimately nigh**
> **Than e'en the sweetest earthly tie."**

I said to him, as I read it, "Is that all there is of the poem?" I thought there might be several verses. Turning to me in his abrupt way, he asked, "What more do you want?" I felt rebuked. I felt there was no more needed than that to know the living Saviour, to be in direct contact with Him, to know His love, to know His power, to know His wisdom and His grace. "What more do you want?" God grant us a better knowledge of the Son of God. J. R. C.

BRIEF LIFE of the AUTHOR.

"A BELOVED brother and faithful minister in the Lord," yea, more than a brother —a father, a guide, a friend—passed from our midst on Lord's day morning, 14th January, 1917, in the person of our late Editor, JOHN R. CALDWELL, of Courtallam, Helensburgh.

WILLIAM CALDWELL, his father, also of saintly memory, was brought up in the silk trade. A Scotsman by birth, he spent some time in business in Dublin, where he married, proceeded to London for a brief period, thence joined James M'Auley in business in Glasgow, so that J. R. Caldwell had both Scots and Irish blood in his veins, and retained a lively interest in the land of a mother whose memory he cherished.

Born in Dublin on 26th May, 1839, his parents came to reside in Glasgow when he was five years of age, where he was brought up in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord," his father being a leader in connection with the Independent Church, latterly in Ewing Place, corner of West Campbell Street and Waterloo Street. As might be expected from such surroundings, his leanings were ever to the moral and even evangelical side of

life. After being interviewed by two deacons, who inquired if he believed in the Bible and the Lord Jesus, he joined the Church, taught in the Sunday school (of which THOS. COCHRANE was superintendent), was a member of the Y.M.C.A., and passed for a Christian by all who knew him. Yet, as he writes in *How and When*: "With an orthodox evangelical creed I had never been born again, and sin and the world retained their power over me."

At this time, in the year 1860, GORDON FORLONG, a well-known gentleman evangelist, was invited by the godly elders of Ewing Place Church to have a series of meetings in the Church, with the result, to use Mr. Caldwell's own words, "I felt I had not experienced the great change, and at the close of one meeting I waited as an anxious one among many, and heard from John v. 24, 'He that heareth My Word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath Everlasting Life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.' This was indeed good news to me. I heard, I believed, and I had everlasting life. From this time the Bible became a new Book to me, my constant and loved companion. I read it with opened eyes, and beheld in it wondrous things."

The revival in the North of Ireland in '59 created great excitement in Glasgow. Pulpits and platforms of many Churches were open to laymen as preachers of the Gospel. Open-air

meetings were held in many parts of the city, one young merchant enthusiast preached to a large crowd from the steps of the Royal Exchange. The old legal ecclesiastical bands were being snapped in many places. The life of the born-again element in Ewing Place seems to have overflowed its bounds. The basement of the Church was utilised by them first for Sunday school work, with considerable success, then having rented the school-room from the managers, they launched out into an Evening Service on definite Gospel lines. This seemed too much for the minister, ALEX. FRAZER, for however much he had yielded to former efforts, to have a Service apart from Church control was too much for him; it must be stopped at once.

Perhaps it was one of the "all things," for just at this time Mr. Caldwell, Senr., who was feeling the bondage of sectarianism, and Mr. Caldwell, Junr., who in the days of first love, was inquiring "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" got into contact with brethren named Whitfield, Morrison, Apperley, and other godly men taking a lead in a meeting emerging from Scotch Baptist lines, to what would now be called Brethren lines, though then, as now, a better definition is the "ways that be in Christ" (1 Cor. iv. 17).

Bible Readings had been held in the home of Mr. Caldwell. Various doctrines were discussed, and the Scriptures were examined on

themes hitherto neglected, with the result that Mr. J. R. Caldwell and his friend and partner, Mr. Geo. Young, were immersed as believers in Christ in West Campbell Street Hall.

A transition period of some months at this juncture would be difficult to describe, but it ended in a severance from membership in the congregational denomination, and an adherence, which was to be lifelong, to meeting in simplicity, according to the Scriptures. As he says, "He found there those with whom he had true fellowship, to whom the Word of the Lord was precious and the Name of Jesus sweet."

After a time of happy fellowship and active service in West Campbell Street Hall, one day Mr. Whitfield said to Mr. Wm. Caldwell: "A Mr. Penman, who has erected a marble showroom in Dumbarton Road, finds he must give it up. Why not take it as a Gospel hall for that district?" The building was examined, the district explored, and soon a Sunday school and Gospel work was set agoing in "Marble Hall, 85 Dumbarton Road," a name which was to be known wherever truth was loved. There was no thought of forming a separate Assembly, but as the work increased, the converts multiplied, and were resident in the district, it was finally arranged (not without opposition at first) to make this a soul-home for the worship and service of God and the Communion of Saints. Messrs. Wm. Caldwell, Thos.

Cochrane, J. R. Caldwell, Geo. Young, and John Smith, were amongst the 20 who sat down to break bread the first Lord's day morning.

Mr. J. R. Caldwell retained an active connection with Marble Hall during his residence in town and for years after his removal to Bearsden. Advancing age, inability to travel the distance to his home, the need of help of the little Assembly in Milngavie, near his home, then finally his removal to Helensburgh six years ago, closed his connection with a City Assembly. His help, even in old age, in the two country gatherings, proved invaluable, and none mourn his loss more sincerely than those who knew him more intimately through the smaller circle of the assemblies near his home.

A successful business life, a strenuous Church life, and a steady Christian life does not afford points of contrast or scenes of romance to make an enthralling story, yet it would take a volume to speak of the many-sided life of usefulness of such a "brother beloved." A few phases must suffice.

MINISTRY OF THE WORD may be mentioned first, as his name will be remembered by thousands of the Lord's people in all parts of the earth who had the privilege of hearing Mr. Caldwell speak. The portrait presented with this volume will be recalled as one of the happiest poses, when in the happiest vein of ministering the Word which he loved, to the people whom he loved.

Some idea of his ministry may be obtained from the following first impression of one who became his life-long friend.

"It is about forty-four years since I first met Mr. J. R. Caldwell in the City of Dublin, at one of the Annual Believers' Meetings, held at that time in the Metropolitan Hall. He spoke at the breakfast, and although I do not remember his subject, I was greatly interested, and asked who he was. I think it was during the same Conference that he spoke on the verse, "All power is given unto Me in Heaven and in earth" (Matt. xxviii. 18). His address was the most thrilling to which I have ever listened. The impression made on that assembly was profound. As he sat down, the late Mr. Shuldam Henry dropped on his knees on the platform and thanked God for the One who had all power; then the late Mr. Rees, of Sunderland, rose and asked the audience to stand and sing, 'Glory, honour, praise, and power be unto the Lamb for ever.' My own feelings were that I did not wish any one to speak to me, for the address seemed to have led me into the immediate presence of God."

In the Morning Meeting, at which he ministered only at intervals, the Word was sweet, short, Christ exalting, and worship producing. In the Sunday school, in the Gospel meeting, at the street corner, the message was quietly and reverently listened to. But his forte was ministering the Word to the

saints in the continued exposition of a book—Leviticus, Corinthians, Thessalonians, and Hebrews being his favourites—or in a series of addresses on the Offerings, Old Testament Characters, God's Chosen People, Christian duties, or similar themes; or, as was much more common, in a helpful message from the portion of Scripture or theme which had formed his private meditation during the preceding days.

His notes were merely small slips of paper with the headings and the abundant references to which he asked his readers to turn in the course of every address. He kept scant record, if any, of where and when he had given certain addresses, and felt quite free in repeating a message if suited to the hearers. "The Red Heifer" and "Kinsman-Redeemer" were favourite subjects on which he spoke many times. "God our Father," "The Love of God," "The Church," and "The Lord's Coming," will be remembered by many as others which flowed in freshness from heart to heart.

His Writings took up a great part of his time when not occupied with the extensive business of which he was the head. One of his warmest books is "Things to Come," written in early Christian life, concise and up-to-date even to-day, put third on the list of "Best Books on the Signs of the Times," by Dr. Torrey, of Los Angeles, Cal. His other books, "God's Chosen People," "Shadows of Christ,"

" Christ in the Levitical Offerings," " Earthly Relationships," " Because Ye Belong to Christ," and other subjects, have edified many. His volumes of Exposition of the Epistle to the Corinthians, first given as addresses to audiences of 600 on Sunday afternoons, latterly issued under the title of " The Charter of the Church," will long remain standard volumes of exegesis on the Church Epistles. Many smaller books and pamphlets, Gospel tracts, and almost innumerable magazine articles, always betraying care in preparation, moderation in statement, and aiming at the definite spiritual profit of the readers, flowed from his busy pen during the long period of close on 60 years of Christian life.

His first article was written soon after his conversion in 1860, the last from his pen on " The Times of the Gentiles," appeared in *The Witness* for February, 1914, and showed little waning of focus or force. The present volume was the last *extended* series of papers from his pen.

The present Editor took occasion when hundreds were hanging on the gracious words of ministry from Mr. Caldwell in his prime to arrange with an expert stenographer, who loved the truth and valued the ministry, to supply full notes of a large number of addresses on many subjects. Quite a number of these remain for use, so that he being dead, yet shall speak through the printed page for many days

to come. It is not too much to say that as "a faithful minister in the Lord" his messages, written and oral, have been blessed to the edification of tens of thousands in many parts of the world, and will continue to be used of God to thousands more.

As COUNSELLOR his advice was sought by brethren of high and low degree in all parts of the world. It was ever freely given, either with quiet deliberate voice or concise yet clear pen. For long years hours upon hours of busy days in his office were given up to the individual believer who called for domestic or business counsel, or the familiar twos or threes who "wanted to hear what Mr. Caldwell's mind was on a subject which was troubling them" in Assembly or district. The extent and value of this service will only be rightly assessed at the Day of Recompense.

HIS LIBERALITY, which none would have dared to speak about in his lifetime, cannot even now be told, because he strictly followed the Scriptural injunction, "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth" (Matt. vi. 3). An earnest advocate of "systematic giving," which in his position meant a liberality considerably above what most would judge. A genuine case of need, or a work or worker deserving help, only need be mentioned to him by one in whom he had confidence, and prompt help was soon on the road, often without any indication of its source.

The Caledonian Bible Carriage, tent work, special efforts, and the mission field were special objects of his care.

A Nathaniel himself, he seemed to consider all who bore the Name of Christ were the same, with the result that more than once, nay, regularly, he was imposed upon, yet his heart and his purse remained in large measure open to " His own." Freely he had received, freely he gave.

SOUND DOCTRINE ever found in Mr. Caldwell a loyal adherent and faithful advocate. From " Higher Criticism," the New Theology, and much of the modern familiarity with Bible truths and doctrines his spiritual instinct revolted. More than once in the pages of *The Witness* he reiterated his adherence to the fundamentals of the faith. The statement at the close of 1910 is typical. It reads :

" Whilst not claiming infallibility, we rejoice to believe that a steadfast testimony throughout has been maintained concerning the fundamentals of the faith, including the plenary and verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, the perfect humanity, essential Deity, glorious work and worth of the Lord Jesus Christ, the utter ruin of man, necessity and sufficiency of the atonement, present possession of eternal life by the believer, the priesthood of all saints, the oneness of the Body of Christ, the immersion of believers as being the Christian baptism of the New Testament, the weekly ' breaking

of bread ' as the privilege of all the children of God, separation from the world and its associations, gathering together in the Name of the Lord apart from sectarian titles and clerical assumption, the personal and pre-millennial coming of the Lord as the ' blessed hope ' for which we wait, the eternal conscious punishment of the impenitent, and the eternal blessing and glory of the saved." Continuing, he added :

" It may be well to make clear our position regarding the somewhat vexed question of ' the fellowship of saints.' Apart from a period of some years, from 1876, during which the Editor was induced to advocate narrow views concerning assembly fellowship, *The Witness* has continued to advocate the reception of all those who are truly ' born again,' sound in fundamental doctrine, and godly in walk. Such was the practice of ' beloved brethren ' of early days, and such the ministry by tongue and pen of many of our honoured contributors now with the Lord."

His Business Life could only be adequately dealt with in a commercial journal. Brought up in his father's firm, the name was changed from James M'Auley & Co. to Caldwell, Young & Co. in 1883. As silk manufacturers, with branches in London, Paris, and Manchester, and agencies in many parts, they had an extensive connection in Burma, throughout the British Empire, and in most parts of the world. Employees and customers alike re-

spected Mr. Caldwell, and all who had dealings with him held him in high esteem for his ability, integrity, and consistent testimony as a Christian business man.

Nothing grieved him more than the reports which were spread abroad about his speculating on the Stock Exchange, investing in questionable companies, and such-like. Not one penny was ever invested outside his own business, over which he had intelligent control. Thus preaching and practice were uniform in all branches of his life. The Bible usually lay where it could be seen on his desk, a silent witness to his faith in the Word of our God which shall stand for ever.

One of the greatest blessings a man doing business either in the world or the Church can have is a HAPPY HOME LIFE. This Mr. Caldwell had in no ordinary measure. United in marriage to Miss Margaret Philips in 1876, she proved a helpmeet indeed in the many interests of a loved husband. Blessed with five daughters and one son (who succeeds his father in the business), given to hospitality, the home life was an example of the teachings concerning domestic relationships which were again and again enunciated from the public platform. They all survive to mourn a husband and parent to them best known and therefore most beloved.

A LEADER he was, yet he solemnly affirmed, especially at a time of special stress some 27

years ago, that he would never lead a "party" on any pretence whatever. To seek to lead on in the way of truth, or into closer vital touch with God was his delight. The leadership which involved a repetition of 1 Corinthians iii. he utterly abhorred. What burning words of warning we remember concerning those who, like Simeon and Levi in their "assembly" strife, received the "Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel" (Gen. xlix. 7), and with what sorrow he referred to the modern "divisions of Reuben" (Judges v. 16).

Later Life. Never robust, although enjoying a good measure of health, Mr. Caldwell was laid aside at intervals, and latterly had to spend part of the year in the South of France, yet he did a marvellous amount of work for the space of 40 years. About the last interview the writer had with him he inquired if he did not think he had done too much during these busy 40 years. "Not during the first half, but certainly during the latter half," was his calm but wearied reply.

The first real signs of closing years were manifest in 1905. Before leaving for France, 52 brethren, thinking they might not have another occasion, desired to confirm their love and return thanks for the help received, met Mr. Caldwell in a room of the Christian Institute on Monday, 20th November, 1905. His response to the kindly words touched all

hearts. Supposed to be his parting message then, it may truly be counted as such now, so we give it as uttered :

" It has pleased the Lord in the most gentle manner possible to hinder my service in the way of public speaking, otherwise I have suffered very little. At the present time there is one thing I would like you to remember in prayer, that is that I might learn the intended lesson in the Lord's dealing with me in this way. I do not know that I have apprehended it, but I desire that I might know what the Lord's intended lesson for me is, and I think also that all the brethren should seek to know what His lesson may be for them as well as for me. I have made it my aim so to act that I might be done without, for I believe the more closely we follow God's lines and methods the more will this be the case. Things will not be dependent upon one or two.

" I have only to say that I greatly value this expression of sympathy. It is a comforting thought to know that I have the sympathy, prayers, and love of the brethren. I commend you all ' to God and to the Word of His grace.'

" For myself, I feel utterly unworthy of this testimony. I feel like the words, ' less than the least of all saints.' I feel that the words, ' chief of sinners ' belong to me, but sovereign grace o'er sin abounded, and surely at this moment a number of us to-day can praise God for the abundant grace that has borne

with us and carried us to hoar hairs and given us the assurance that He will never leave us."

Since that date, although able to be at business and to help a little in meetings, he has gradually relaxed his interest in things seen and handled.

Closing Days. The last two years have practically been spent in his home, moving out a little in the hours of sunshine. Month by month his interest and knowledge of things around grew less and less, latterly he was as a child resting in the bosom of his Father God, till without a murmur during all the weary months of pain and weakness he quietly fell on sleep on the Resurrection morning, to awake in His likeness on the morning of the Resurrection.

Had strength permitted we are assured the parting words of 1905 would have been reiterated : " I commend you to God and to the Word of His grace."

Devout men carried him to his burial in Row Churchyard, on the shores of the Gareloch, not far from his home. Mr. Alex. Stewart, a friend and fellow-Christian worker from earliest days, took the service in the house; Mr. W. H. M'Laughlin, of Belfast, an old and loved friend of the family, at the open grave touchingly exclaimed : " Thank God for John R. Caldwell," and committed the remains to the earth until the moment when that which was sown in weakness shall be " raised in glory."

In order to afford the multitude of believers who had profited by the ministry of Mr. Caldwell an opportunity of paying their respects to one they loved a MEMORIAL SERVICE was held in the Christian Institute on Lord's day afternoon following the interment. Messrs. Jas. Robertson, Geo. Young, J. P. Sinclair, Wm. Kyle, C. P. Watson, R. G. Munsie (whom he spoke to about his own soul when a lad of 7), and Hy. Pickering gave suitable messages to the large numbers present. Mr. W. H. G. Caldwell feelingly responded, and testifying to his father's love and care, urged all parents to follow his father's example and "make friends of your sons."

May grace, so freely bestowed upon our brother, be given to us to seek to obey the injunction, "Remember them who . . . have spoken unto you the Word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation: JESUS CHRIST the same yesterday, and today, and for ever." HYP.

EPITOME OF
CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE
IN PSALM XXXII.

PSALM XXXII.

¶ A psalm of David, Maschil.

BLESSED is he whose trangression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

2. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.

3. When I kept silence, my bones waxed old, through my roaring all the day long:

4. For day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah.

5. I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.

6. For this shall every one that is godly pray unto Thee in a time when Thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him.

7. Thou art my hiding-place; Thou shalt preserve me from trouble; Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah.

8. I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with Mine eye.

9. Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding; whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.

10. Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about.

11. Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.

EPITOME OF CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE IN PSALM XXXII.

By J. R. CALDWELL.

I. Blessedness.

THE first verse of this psalm may be read without the words in italics. Read thus it becomes an exultant exclamation: "Blessed; transgression forgiven; sin covered!"

There is a blessedness spoken of in Psalm i., but it cannot be known or enjoyed until first the blessedness of Psalm xxxii. has been experienced. There can be no real substantial blessedness in any human breast until there is the assured knowledge of the forgiveness of sins.

Conscience, in spite of every effort to lull it to sleep and keep it silent, will ever and anon be testifying against allowed sin. Circumstances unexpectedly crop up that force upon the mind the possible nearness

and the ultimate certainty of death and judgment, and the eternal issues.

Thus any temporary peace, and the pleasures of sin which are but for a season, are broken in upon; and well it is if those thus exercised instead of resorting to Satan's opiates, turn to the God against whom they have sinned, and in whose favour alone life and joy and peace, all that goes to make up true blessedness, can be found.

Transgression is an outward act. It is the breach of a known law; it is the violation of conscience. "All have thus sinned and come short of the glory of God." Sin is the evil root whence all transgression springs. "Transgression forgiven" is a marvellous blessing, but even after that is known, many a one has been sorely harassed by finding that still "sin in the flesh" remains, ready at any moment to break out again. The evil principle is there; it is born with the flesh, and it remains in it so long as it exists. David knew this well when he wrote: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity: and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psalm li. 5). Paul knew it when he said:

"In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. vii. 18).

If the reader has a garden he will know what it means to spend much time and labour over it, carefully pulling out all the weeds till not one remains. He rakes it over, and leaves it with a sigh of relief; that work won't need to be done again for a long time! But soon a genial shower refreshes the soil, and, whilst flowers and fruits seem to rejoice in the glowing sunshine, the carefully weeded bed is found to be closely dotted over with the buddings of a myriad crop of freshly-sprouting weeds. And so it ever is; if anything but weeds is to be obtained from the soil, it must be from what *grace* puts into it of seeds or plants; nature will never render anything of its own accord but useless noxious weeds.

The weeds are like the transgressions. These evil words or doings may be confessed, renounced, and forgiven, but deep down under the surface, in the very nature of the man, are hidden the seeds and fibrous roots of "sin in the flesh." It is blessed to know "transgressions forgiven," as in

Colossians ii. 13, "Having forgiven you all trespasses"; but how much more blessed to know *that sin is covered*. So covered that the eye of God cannot detect it. Speaking to Israel, God said: "Thou art a stiffnecked people; . . . from the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against the Lord" (Deut. ix. 6, 7). But in face of the accuser, their enemy, He says: "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob; neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel" (Num. xxiii. 21). So perfectly is the sin, the evil root in our nature, "put away" by the atoning blood of Jesus, that not only has the believer "redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace," but the very nature in which sin is inherent has been by God condemned, sentenced, executed on the Cross of Christ. The believer can thus say: "I was crucified with Christ," and God no more reckons him to be a man standing in sinful flesh—in the Adam nature—but a man who has endured the death penalty, and is risen again, alive unto God

in Christ Jesus. In this connection it is well to note the use in Scripture of the terms "sin" and "sins." The singular "sin" expresses the root, the evil principle; the plural "sins" denotes all that issues from the evil root.

The man who is thus "blessed" has the further joy of knowing that to him the Lord "will not impute iniquity." In Romans iv. 8 these words are quoted. In the Psalm they are simply negative: in Romans they are given a positive application. Not only is sin "*not* imputed"; but "righteousness *is* imputed," and that "without works." The abundance of grace that "pardons transgression" and "covers sin" bestows "the gift of righteousness." (See Rom. v. 17.) Henceforth God, the Justifier, reckons him to be a righteous person—perfectly righteous, for Christ is "made of God unto him *righteousness*" (1 Cor. 1. 30). "The righteousness which is of God by faith" (Phil. iii. 9).

The characteristic feature of all who are in this condition of blessedness is that in their spirit there "is no guile." They have nothing to hide—all has been opened out

unto God. A story is told of the son of a wealthy man who fell among evil companions and into foolish ways. He soon became involved in debt, and his great fear was lest it should become known to his father. That which he so much feared at last took place. His father heard of the evil doings of his son, charged him with being in debt, and besought him to tell him all the truth. But the son made little of his liabilities—he only owed a few shillings to one and a pound or two to another, and nothing more was acknowledged than he found it impossible to conceal. Here was guile. The father was deeply conscious that the whole truth was not being divulged, and was determined to get to the bottom of it as the only way truly to benefit his poor, foolish boy. "Tell me, my son," said the father, "every penny you owe; tell me the name of every one from whom you have borrowed money—much or little—keep nothing back; and if you do, I will pay it all off. I will forgive you the wrong you have done, and enable you to make a fresh start, only promising that you will never again go into

debt." The guile with which he had so stoutly striven to hide the truth, to make little of his debts, to make the father believe it was not so bad after all, was now completely cast aside. There was now no longer any object to be served by covering up his debts. Now he made out the list of his liabilities in full, not a single debt—large or small—would he omit. The prospect of a complete discharge and a release from the bondage and terror that had eaten the soul out of him, as well as a happy reconciliation with his father, forbade the idea of anything short of a guileless confession of all he had done.

Oh! the blessed release of pouring out the heart's deep sorrow and conscious guilt into the ear of the God of all grace! The guilty soul may come in the perfect assurance that all will be forgiven, for "the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth from all sin." He charges the sinner with guilt. He says: "Thou hast made Me to serve with thy sins; thou hast wearied Me with thine iniquities." What could be expected to follow such words but judgment and righteous wrath;

but, oh! mystery of infinite love and grace, it is "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine Own sake, and will not remember thy sins" (Isa. xliii. 24, 25). Blessed are they who have thus "tasted that the Lord is gracious."

II.

The Chastening Rod.

GOD has many ways of breaking down the opposition of proud hearts and bringing them to Himself. Here the Psalmist says: "Day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me." And how strange the combination, "I kept silence," and yet he speaks of "roaring all the day long." There can be little doubt that this is one of the Psalms in which David alludes to the period of his terrible backsliding from the time of his grievous fall in the matter of Bathsheba, until the hour when Nathan the prophet, sent of God, pointed to him as the self-condemned criminal saying, "Thou art the man."

It was a time when things went ill with him. His moisture was turned into the drought of summer. It seemed as if his very bones were become prematurely old. His "roaring all the day long" surely tells of a fretful discontented murmuring state of soul. His angry roar was like that of a wild bull in a net, for he was suffering the fury of the Lord, the rebuke of his God (see Isa. li. 20). Yet in spite of all this noisy complaint he was silent toward God. No broken-hearted confession escaped his lips; no pouring out of his heart, with all the burden of his conscious guilt into Jehovah's ear; he keeps silence. And this is ever Satan's device with those who have sinned. If he can keep them away from the God who still loves them; if he can get them to shut themselves up in hopeless despair, or to become so entangled in a net-work of business and pleasure as to forget their guilt and become conscience hardened, then Satan gains his end; they are silent toward God. So long as this guilty silence lasts, until there breaks forth from a contrite heart the agonizing sob, "I

have sinned," restoration to conscious peace and joy cannot be. To this end, therefore, in faithfulness and in love that knows no change is the discipline of the chastening rod. "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous therefore and repent" (Rev. iii. 19). These ways of the Lord are still the same as of old. So far back as the days of the Patriarch Job this discipline, with a view to spiritual blessing, was oftentimes made use of by God. It is graphically described in chapter xxxiii. The object is in verse 17: "That He may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man." There is some "purpose" pursued by every man, some desire, some ambition, something toward the attaining of which his energies are bent. The gratification of pride is most frequently at the bottom of it. At all costs, if his soul is to be saved he must be arrested in this pursuit. Therefore "He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword." Thus God, "the preserver of all men," is watching over him, and guarding him from dangers unseen (the pit), and seen (the sword), with

his ultimate salvation in view. "He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain; so that his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat. His flesh is consumed away that it cannot be seen; and his bones that were not seen stick out; yea his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers." What a picture of thousands on beds of sickness in their homes, and thousands more in our infirmaries and hospitals. The one idea of such is generally to be relieved of pain and restored to health. Never a thought of the beneficence that is hidden behind it all; the gracious purpose for which it has been sent; the deep soul disease that must be reached ere the Gospel message can gain an entrance to the heart.

Those who visit in our infirmaries and carry the Gospel to the sick and suffering, find it fruitful work. It would seem as if many a proud heart and stubborn will had been brought there to be subdued, and many an ear otherwise closed was thus opened to listen to the glad message of salvation.

"If there be a messenger with Him."

Happy is the "messenger" whom God uses to carry the words of life to such as are thus being made ready to receive it. "Then He is gracious unto him, and saith, 'Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a Ransom'." "He looketh upon men, and if any say, 'I have sinned and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not'; He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light. Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man, to bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living" (read Job xxxiii. 17-30).

These ways of God are again remarkably set forth in Psalm cvii. First there is the wilderness with its sorrows, privations, hardships, and trials, more or less the common discipline of all the children of God. It was a difficult path, but it was "the right way."

Then there are those who "sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron; because they rebelled against the words of God and condemned the counsel of the Most

High; therefore He brought down their heart with labour; they fell down and there was none to help. Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and He saved them out of their distresses . . . Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men."

Again, "fools because of their transgression and because of their iniquities are afflicted; their soul abhorreth all manner of meat, and they draw nigh unto the gates of death. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and He saveth them out of their distresses. He sent His Word, and healed them and delivered them from their destructions." Then again there is the Hallelujah chorus, and it is added, "Let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare His works with rejoicing."

Then there are those who go down to the sea in ships. "He commandeth and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof," until "they are at their wit's end." "Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and He bringeth

them out of their distresses; He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still; then are they glad because they be quiet; so He bringeth them unto their desired haven. Oh, that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!" How needful are these exhortations to thanksgiving and praise. So often men are "glad," but return not to give thanks for the cry heard and the grace bestowed. Then at the end we read, "Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord."

Thus it is evident that all the troubles and distresses that come upon mankind are providentially adjusted to the spiritual condition and need of each individual, and are sent in lovingkindness and in faithfulness to the end, that those who are living in forgetfulness of God and in rebellion against His words, may be brought by the very pressure and hopelessness of their circumstances to cry unto the Lord, to prove His compassion, His readiness to forgive, and His power to deliver and save.

"Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for His grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face."

"Blind unbelief is sure to err
And scan His works in vain;
God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain."

But a word of caution here. It by no means follows that those who are specially afflicted are sinners above others. There are afflictions that are retributive; as in David's case, though the sin is absolutely and eternally forgiven, yet the prophet had to add, "The child must die, and the sword shall never depart from thy house." But there are others that are *preventive*, such as Paul's thorn in the flesh, which was to keep him from being "exalted above measure"—to save him from spiritual pride. Others again are chosen of God to shew forth how His grace can supply long patience, and produce the fruit of thanksgiving and praise, where weary suffering and weakness upon a "bed of languishing" have been the allotted portion of some of the choicest of His saints for years. And beyond all these there are

the sufferings that are the direct result of a life and testimony for Christ, which rouses the enmity of Satan, and brings the faithful servant into reproach, persecution, and it may be martyrdom for His name. Great will be the reward of such.

III.

Confession and Forgiveness.

EVEN in David's time, when there was a divinely appointed priesthood of the house of Aaron, he did not speak of confessing his sin to a priest or of receiving absolution at the hands of a fellow-man. He knew that no man could "redeem his brother or give to God a ransom for him" (see Psalm xlix. 7), therefore no man had power to forgive sins. He goes straight to God Himself and says, "I will confess my transgression unto the Lord." Nothing can be simpler, and there is no other way of securing the blessing of forgiveness.

There is no stronger propensity in man than to hide his sin. He will try even to hide it from himself. To find an excuse, or

to lay the blame on another, or in some way to make little of it. Adam laid the blame upon Eve and upon Jehovah Himself. "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat" (Gen. iii. 12). It was almost a plea of "not guilty." The woman also has her plea, "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." Such was the character of our first parents after "sin entered," and such the way of all their seed.

Aaron, after demanding the golden earrings of the children of Israel, putting them into the fire, melting them and moulding them into the form of a calf, and then fashioning it with graving tools, when charged by Moses with his crime, first blames the people—"Thou knowest they are set on mischief"—when he himself was the instigator of it, and then would have Moses to believe that by some mysterious process the gold of itself assumed the form of a calf. "I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf" (see Exodus xxxii.).

Saul, when charged by Samuel with disobeying the Word of the Lord, admits his

guilt; he says, "I have sinned, yet honour me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people and before Israel." And he also blamed the people—"The people took of the spoil sheep and oxen, . . . to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in Gilgal" (1 Sam. xv.). "And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry" (verses 22, 23).

A downright honest confession before God is what He approves, and meets with His instant grace. Such was David's. "Thou art the man," said Nathan; "I have sinned against the Lord," was David's response—a confession that was wrung from the depths of a broken heart, without excuse, without reproaching others, without extenuation of any sort; a simple, honest "guilty before God." Straightway from God by the same lips that had carried conviction came the answer of sovereign grace—"The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die" (2 Sam. xii. 13). But whilst grace thus

instantly and unreservedly blotted out his transgression, yet the moral government of God demanded that His disapproval of David's sin should be unmistakably declared. Hence the divine sentence, so awful, so inexorable. "The sword shall never depart from thy house," &c. Thus although sins are forgiven, even sins of deepest dye, yet sowing to the flesh means reaping corruption—the inevitable crop will come, and must be reaped. Happy is he who, sowing to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

In the short sentence, "Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin," there are two words that have a double significance. This is not uncommon in the Hebrew language, and often it suggests most edifying and illuminating ideas. The word "forgive" in Hebrew here used is the same as that rendered "bear" in Leviticus xvi. 22—"And the goat shall *bear* upon him all their iniquities." And the word "iniquity" is the same Hebrew word rendered sometimes "punishment" (see Gen. iv. 13; Lev. xxvi. 41, and other places), and "punishment of iniquity." So

that without doing violence in translation the sentence might be alternatively read, "Thou barest the punishment of my sin." Is there not a divine significance in thus linking together in one word the "forgiveness" and the "bearing" of sin, and also in one word the "iniquity" and its "punishment"? Does it not vividly convey the thought that the forgiveness of sin necessitated the bearing of it, and that if iniquity is "not imputed," it is because its punishment has been borne by another? Could anything more conclusively show the great divine principle of atonement by substitution?

It may be asked, "If I have been convicted of sin, and if I confess my sin to the Lord frankly and fully, how am I to know assuredly that it is forgiven?"

It is written, "With Thee there is forgiveness, that Thou mayest be feared" (Psalm cxxx. 4). The genuine "fear of the Lord" on which Scripture sets so high a value can never be experienced until forgiveness is obtained and enjoyed. In the prophetic song of Zacharias, recorded in Luke i. 68-79, one of the great blessings for Israel was

"To give knowledge of salvation unto His people, by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God."

If the fruit of joy and peace, of thanksgiving and filial fear are to be borne, it is not enough to be forgiven, there must also be the assurance of forgiveness.

The child that has offended his parent, and has on that account suffered the parent's displeasure, may come confessing his fault and seeking forgiveness; but if he is allowed to go away without the loving kiss of reconciliation, and in doubt as to whether he is really forgiven or not, how can he be in happy liberty and enjoy his parents' favour so long as this doubt remains? And are not many dear children of God living in a state of uncertainty as to whether all their sins are really completely and eternally forgiven? The Word is plain, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John i. 9).

Our part is to confess: His part is to forgive and to cleanse. His faithfulness and His justice are pledged to the forgiveness

of the sin confessed. It is not merely His mercy and compassion, that also is true, but the ground of confidence is infinitely greater, for it is nothing short of the justice of God secured by the atoning work of His Son, and the faithfulness of God to the Word of Truth wherein He has caused us to hope: these form the solid rock of our confidence. How then do we know that the sin confessed is forgiven? Is it not simply by faith? To wait for feelings is unbelief. To look for any sign in corroboration of God's assurance is simply to doubt the faithfulness or the justice of God, or, as John forcibly puts it, to "make God a liar." To believe that He has fulfilled His Word, and that His doing so is not only in mercy, but in strictest justice, is the only way to honour God.

The Israelite of old who had sinned was to bring a kid to the door of the Tabernacle. He was to lay his guilty hand upon its devoted head. His sin confessed is thus in type conveyed to the unblemished substitute. Death for sin must take place. Either the sinner or the substitute must die. He kills the kid with his own hand, and its

life's blood is poured out. All the rest is done for him by the priest according to the ceremonial law; and then the Word of Jehovah was passed, "It shall be forgiven him" (see Lev. iv. 27-31).

Let us suppose that all this has been scrupulously gone through, and the Israelite is returning to his tent, but instead of leaping for joy at the release from guilt, he is downcast and depressed, and filled with "doubts and fears." You ask him if he has offered the kid? if it was unblemished? if he really killed it? if the priest went through all his part of the ceremony in due order? He answers "Yes, it was all gone through, and yet I don't feel as if I was forgiven." What should we say to such, but tell him simply to believe Jehovah's Word?

Once the writer was in a very large vinery. The owner of it was showing him round, and pointing out the bunches of ripening grapes. The house was all of glass, and had a convex roof which secured enough warmth to bring the grapes to perfection without artificial heat. Another had been shown it the day before, and had

asked, "Is there no artificial heat?" "None," said the owner. The pipes were all laid, and no doubt connected with the furnace, to be used if required in winter, but at this time they were cold. The enquirer, supposing he was unobserved, put down his hand to feel the pipe. But he was detected in the act, and doubtless not a little ashamed of being caught in so glaring a way expressing a doubt of the proprietor's word. He only wanted to *feel*, in order to corroborate a *word*. Let not any who may read this act in such a way with the Word of God. As the Word of God is greater than the word of man, so let faith grasp it, and rest on it, apart from feelings, and so enjoy the grace that forgives and cleanses.

But some may say, "How often can I hope for forgiveness? I have come so many times confessing the same sin, that I am sure the patience of God must be exhausted." This need not be, for there is no sin which grace can pardon that the power of the Holy Spirit cannot subdue. Just as in faith you come for pardon, so in faith claim the keeping power of God.

But there is no limit to forgiveness short of the riches of God's grace (see Eph. i. 7), and the value of the blood of Christ, which God assures us "cleanseth from all sin."

Peter enquired of the Lord, "How often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Till seven times?" Doubtless Peter thought this a wonderful stretch of charity. But the Lord replies, "I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven" (Matt. xviii. 22). Again in Luke xvii. 4: "If thy brother trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn unto thee saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him." In Isaiah lv. 7 we read: "Our God will abundantly pardon"; or in the margin, "Will multiply to pardon." Is not that just "seventy times seven"? It is multiplication. And why does the Lord enjoin such liberal and ceaseless forgiveness upon His disciples? Is it not just that they may be like Himself? There is no limit set to the disciples' readiness to forgive one another, because there is no limit to the infinite resources of God's grace in Christ Jesus and by His precious blood.

IV.

"A Time of Finding."

THE experience of David, the grace in which his confession and his prayer were answered, is an encouragement to others in like manner to make their appeal to the Lord. "For this," or "because of this, shall everyone that is godly pray unto Thee in a time when Thou mayest be found," or perhaps, as in the margin of the Revised Version, "in a time of finding out sin." There are times when slumbering consciences are aroused, when the Word of God comes in convicting power like a sharp two-edged sword . . . discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart (see Heb. iv. 12, 13), when, in the light of the realised presence of God, things that before were tolerated and excused are seen in their true character, and the soul becomes acutely conscious of defilement and estrangement from God. It was such a time for Isaiah when, a worshipper in the Temple, he saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted, and

the seraphim veiling their faces and their feet, as poised on cherubic wings in flaming majesty above the throne they cried one to another, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts" (Isa. vi.).

It was in the year that King Uzziah died. He died under the judgment of God—a leper—for his sin of invading the holy precincts of Jehovah's house in fleshly pride and wilfulness. There is no record of his repentance or restoration. His death, therefore, must have conveyed to all Israel a solemn warning, and awakened many a heart-searching thought. How different might it have been had he, like David, made open confession of his sin and appealed to the grace of Jehovah!

But Isaiah is in that light of God's presence made conscious of defilement as he had never been before; his righteousness he saw to be as "filthy rags." "Woe is me! For I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." He sees himself and the whole nation to be moral

lepers. Under the law the leper was ordained to wear a covering upon his upper lip and to go about crying, "Unclean, unclean" (see Lev. xiii. 45). Isaiah takes this place before the Lord. He honestly owns his unfitness for that holy presence, and instantly at the bidding of Jehovah flew one of the seraphim, and touched his lips with a burning coal taken from the altar, declaring to his burdened heart, "Lo, this hath touched thy lips; thine iniquity is taken away and thy sin purged." Thus is he fitted to be a worshipper and a witness. He knows the meaning of the word, "There is forgiveness with Thee that Thou mayest be feared."

In like manner was it with Job. All the discipline he passed through was with an appointed end in view. Just and upright as he was, so that there was none like him in the earth, yet he was profoundly ignorant of the evil that lurked within until, brought face to face with God, he discovers his real character in the light of His presence. "I have heard of Thee with the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee, where-

fore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes" (Job xlii. 5, 6).

So was it with Daniel, whose faultless record surpasses all others in Scripture (the Holy One alone excepted). The vision of the glorious Man by the river Hiddekel turned his comeliness into corruption, and left him without strength. But to him are then spoken such words of grace as few have ever heard: "O man, greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright" (see Daniel x. 4-12).

Hezekiah at one time could declare his own excellence, "Remember now, O Lord, I beseech Thee, how I have walked before Thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in Thy sight" (Isa. xxxviii. 3). But, again, we read concerning him: "Howbeit in the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to enquire of the wonder that was done in the land, God left him to try him that he might know all that was in his heart." God knew the deceitfulness of his heart all along, but Hezekiah must be

made to know it too, and so be stripped of all self-righteousness.

Again, in New Testament times, as Peter beheld the wonderful draught of fishes which at the word of the Lord his breaking net enclosed, he, too, realised as never before the immediate presence of God, and, burdened with the consciousness of his sinfulness, fell down at Jesus' knees, saying: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke v. 8).

Such are indeed times of "finding out sin." But if it be painful, it leads to blessing. Self is thus utterly discredited, and the infinite grace of God—who knowing all forgives all, and loves unchangeably—becomes more and more precious.

But, as we have seen, these times of "finding out sin" are just times when God draws near, and is found of the truly penitent soul. Isaiah says: "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found; call ye upon Him while He is near" (Isa. lv. 6). James says: "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you." But there are special times of grace. This whole dispensation is "the day

of salvation," "the acceptable year," but even in this era there are "times of visitation." Such was the time of the Lord's presence in Israel, but they knew it not, and it was hid from their unwilling eyes" (Luke xix. 44).

So also still there is "a day of visitation," when there is a moving of the Spirit of God upon the hearts of men" (see 1 Peter ii. 12), when the life of Jesus seen in the good works of His people, in holy consistent walk and testimony, is acknowledged; and when ears and hearts are drawn graciously toward the message of God's love in Christ Jesus. These are times of revival, times of refreshing from His presence, when saints are stirred up and sinners are saved. They are times when, it might be said, "Jesus of Nazareth passeth by"; precious opportunities when sinners find the Saviour, and when saints are led into closer fellowship with God.

Such times may be followed with trouble, disaster, and sorrows, but he who has drawn nigh to God in the prayer of faith shall not be touched. He may be led "through fire

and through water" (see Psa. lxvi. 10-12), but like the Hebrews in the furnace, where only their bonds were burned (Dan. iii. 25), or Israel going through the midst of the Red Sea or of Jordan, they emerge unscathed and free from the power of the enemy. "All things" are found to have been made to work together for their good.

V.

Past, Present, and Future.

EVERY believer has in some past time come to God through Christ Jesus, and found in Him a "hiding place." His experience since then is that he is preserved from trouble and preserved in trouble. In the blessed future, when all the wilderness trials are over, he will be "compassed about with songs of deliverance."

Adam's first attitude toward God after he fell was to hide *from* God. His presence was unendurable to the conscience-stricken, guilty pair. And still the effort of man in the flesh is to hide from God, to get as far away from Him as possible, to drown the

thought of God in pleasures and in sin, or by immersion in the things of the world.

So was it with "the prodigal son." But there was a day when "he came to himself." It was an awakening from the network of delusion that sin had wrought around him. He saw the realities of the poverty and misery to which he was reduced by self-will and sin: he saw his guilt and his folly, and retraced his steps. In his Father's love he found a refuge, a hiding place from his own sin and shame. It was no unwilling pardon that he received. It was the expression of infinite compassion, unchanged affection, which stopped not short of giving him before all the household the place of a well-loved son, the favours and honours to which he had no title, simply because grace must take its blessed way.

Such is God's way with every repentant sinner. Truly and abundantly He pardons. The man who before hid *from* Him, now hides *in* Him; safe from wrath to come, safe from Satan's power, safe from the world's entanglements, he stands on the ground of sovereign grace, and rejoices in hope of

the glory of God (see Rom. v. 1, 2). The highest characteristic of the future Jerusalem, the city of the great King, is that "God is known in her palaces for a refuge" (Psa. xlviii. 3), and of its future inhabitants He says, "Ye shall know that I am Jehovah when I have wrought with you for My Name's sake, not according to your wicked ways, nor according to your corrupt doings, O ye house of Israel" (Ezek. xx. 44).

At this point the subject of grace is somewhat like Israel on the further shore of the Red Sea. They had been delivered by blood from the judgment-stroke on the night of the Passover. They were the people of God by redemption. But more than this, they were delivered by power from Pharaoh and all his host, and as they saw their enemies dead upon the seashore they sang the praises of Jehovah. It was fitting that they should, and what more befits the newly-saved one than to sing the praises of the Lord. Thus revival times, when convicted sinners are being ushered into the light of life, are always times of singing. Spiritual songs break forth from joyful lips, songs not

indeed inspired as the Psalms of David, but, by the Spirit's teaching and gift, containing the very essence of gospel truth. Doubtless many are faulty and open to criticism, but in the main the hymns composed during times of reviving are the medium of conveying great redemption truths for old and young in a happy and effectual way. The perusal of Ira D. Sankey's testimony regarding the blessing that has rested on the hymns he sang would lead any who doubt the use of sacred song to take a new view of it, and own that it is not a mere "American innovation," but a divinely appointed means of blessing.

But the rejoicing believer soon finds that he has a wilderness of trial to go through, in which difficulties, privations, and adversaries are many and ever new. How blessed for such to know and be able to say in child-like faith, and in conscious weakness, "Thou shalt preserve me from evil."

In the age to come, Satan will be chained and shut up in "the bottomless pit." The world will then be governed in righteousness by Him whose right it is to reign. With

Satan under arrest, and the world ordered according to God, even human nature, though essentially unchanged, will not be subject to influences which in this time continually make for temptation and sin.

But now; Satan has been given a longer rope than ever before, and as to personal interference in the affairs of this age, God has retired from it farther than ever. This marvellous age in which "grace reigns" began with the murder of the Son of God, and will end in the apostate worship of Antichrist. The world is a vast network of evil influences devised by Satanic ingenuity to ensnare the feet of all who would live godly in it.

The flesh is appealed to on every hand. Pride, luxury, pleasure, vanity, are presented to draw away the heart from Christ. "The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life" (1 John ii. 16) are characteristic of the day.

In the midst of such conditions, what power can keep alive the feeble, flickering flame of faith? "Thou shalt preserve me from evil!" He who died to save us, lives

to keep us. We are cast upon the Lord's faithfulness (see 2 Thess. iii. 3 in the R.V.). "But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you and guard you from the evil one." So also in 1 John v. 18: "He that was begotten of God [*i.e.*, the Lord Jesus] keepeth him, and that wicked one toucheth him not." Of His own sheep He says: "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand" (John x. 28, 29). These precious words, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out," are usually given to encourage an awakened sinner to come to Christ. And, indeed, they may well be so used; but viewed in their immediate connection, they rather show the impossibility of any one being lost who has truly come to Him. The word rendered, "cast out," is the same as that used in Acts xxvii. 38, "they cast out the wheat." It does not so much imply, "I will not refuse him," but rather that the sinner having come to Christ, and having been received

by Him, He will never give up or surrender such an one. And why? "For I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise Him up at the last day" (John vi. 38-40). It is as if He said, "Each one who cometh to Me, and believeth on Me, is one whom the Father hath given Me. It is His will that every one of them should be a possessor of eternal life now, and be raised up and presented in resurrection glory at last. If I failed to accomplish this, I should fail in fulfilling His will, the very purpose for which He sent Me. Therefore, him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise give up." What a sense of security is thus given to the believing heart!

Finally, the Psalmist anticipates the joyful future: "Thou shalt compass me about

with songs of deliverance." Much of the experience recorded in the Book of Psalms is sorrowful. In some, *e.g.*, the eighty-eighth, there does not seem to be one relieving ray of light; but at the end, psalm after psalm is full of praise. The book concludes with a grand hallelujah chorus to God Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer.

And such is the assured prospect for every believing soul. Great and many may be the sorrows passed through—the power of adversaries, the prevailing of sin and consequent soul-darkness, the weakness and sufferings of the flesh, the loss by death of those dearly loved and trusted; as the Psalmist says elsewhere, "Thou, O God, hast proved us; Thou has tried us, as silver is tried. Thou broughtest us into the net; Thou laidst affliction upon our loins. Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water; but Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place" (Ps. lxvi. 10-12).

It is the blessed end, the hope of glory, which crowns the believer's pathway, that nerves his energies for conflict and suffering here. He reckons that the light affliction,

which is but for a moment, is working out for him a "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. iv. 17).

It was for the joy that was set before Him that the Lord Jesus—the great example of faith and obedience, of sorrow and patient suffering—endured the cross and despised the shame. The right hand of the throne of God is His rightful recompense. Those, too, who have followed Him shall share His joy and glory, as, seated before the throne, they chant His praise, and are compassed about with heavenly myriads, who learn in them the exceeding riches of the grace of God

VI.

Divine Guidance in Old Testament Times.

EVERY child of God has need of continual guidance. Sheep are silly, and every shepherd knows how ready they are to go astray. And the sheep of Christ are often no better, though indeed they ought to be. Israel needed divine guidance in the wilderness, and Jehovah provided this for them by the pillar of cloud by day and of

fire by night. As they entered the land the Lord said unto them, "Ye have not passed this way heretofore" (Joshua iii. 4). The circumstances and conditions of the way were always changing, so that past experience was no guide for the present path. So is it with us day by day. We know not what a day may bring forth; every day brings new experiences designed in the providence of God to teach us new lessons.

Under the Old Covenant another of Jehovah's methods of guidance was by consulting the priest with the "Urim and Thummim." In Numbers xxvii. 21 we read concerning Joshua as the leader-elect of Israel, "He shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim before the Lord." Thus provision was made for his infallible guidance. But Joshua failed. First as to the attack upon Ai. Judging after the manner of men, a force of three thousand would be quite sufficient. But he and all Israel must learn that a small difficulty, as well as a great one, will prove too much for the arm of flesh. The Lord must be given His

rightful place as "Captain of Jehovah's host," both as to how the work is to be done and as to the power for victory. God discovers to them the secret of defeat; it was sin in the camp that turned the edge of their sword, and not the valour of the foe. When at last they do go up to victory, every detail of the plan of campaign is committed to them by Jehovah; nothing is left to human wisdom or device; not two or three thousand, but all the fighting force must go up. With sin judged and put away, with divine guidance as to their way and divine instructions as to the method of attack, Jehovah is with them, and victory is assured. See Joshua viii. Again he fails in the matter of the wily Gibeonites. Judging according to the sight of his eyes, he is deceived. Appearances seemed perfectly plain. Surely there was no need for asking counsel here. Nevertheless Joshua was thus led into a sad blunder—"They received the men by reason of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord" (Joshua ix. 14; marg).

David, as long as he departed not from the Lord, made it his habit to ask divine

counsel. A fugitive persecuted by Saul, though Israel's future king, and the divine anointing upon him, he found a hiding-place with a few followers in the cave of Adullam. Along with the king was Gad the prophet and Abiathar the priest. So that, though a feeble, discredited company, they "came behind in no gift." Prophet, priest, and king are there, and Jehovah their resource. And such has often been the experience in these days of little gatherings of despised believers. Without much education, with no theological training, with little of this world's wealth or social position, but counting on the promised presence of the Lord and upon the ministry of the Holy Spirit for worship and edification, they have lacked for nothing, they have grown in grace and in knowledge, and have maintained for years a bold and fruitful testimony in the Gospel. Where love and humility abound all goes well. Hence we find David in 1 Samuel xxiii. 2 inquiring of the Lord as to his going against the Philistines and getting definite instruction. Again in verse 4 he inquires so as to make doubly sure as to his path of duty.

In verse 9, alarmed at the attitude of Saul against him, he again asks counsel of the Lord, and receives definite answer to his inquiry. Again, in chapter xxx., David is greatly distressed; the people with him spake of stoning him, but he, encouraging himself in the Lord his God, calls for the priest with the ephod, and "David inquired of the Lord" (verse 8). The divine instructions are enough; he pursues, he overtakes, he recovers all. Again, in 2 Samuel ii. 1, after the death of Saul, David is deeply exercised as to his future course, and inquires of the Lord. The answer is immediate and explicit, directing him to Hebron, whither he goes and remains for seven years. At length the Philistines invade the land and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim. David might have gone against them in his own strength and wisdom; but no, he keeps the place of dependence and inquires of the Lord, and going according to His instructions he obtains the victory of Baal-perazim (2 Sam. v. 19-21). Yet again the enemy appears, and David, not trusting to former success, once more inquires of the Lord (verse

23). This time the divine instructions are totally diverse from any previous way of attack. He is to wait till he hears the sound of going in the tops of the mulberry trees. David did so, as the Lord commanded, and smote the Philistines.

The next important event recorded is the bringing up of the ark. But here there is an ominous silence as to any asking counsel of the Lord. In 1 Chronicles xiii. 1 we find that David consulted with "the captains of thousands and of hundreds, and with every leader." Strange it is that no mention comes in here of consulting Jehovah. Surely this may well account for the disaster that arrested the progress of the ark. Is not this absence of the seeking of Jehovah's counsel just in keeping with the fool-hardy haste that set aside the Lord's command appointing the Levites alone to be the bearers of the ark. From this point onward we find no further mention of David inquiring of the Lord for many years. It is during this period that the awful sin which remains as a foul blot upon his history was committed. Strength of character is lost,

foolish and wicked counsels prevail, and awful indeed is the Spirit's exposure of the root. "The counsel of Ahithophel, which he counselled in those days, was as if a man had inquired at the oracle of God: so was all the counsel of Ahithophel, both with David and with Absalom" (2 Sam. xvi. 23). It is not until after three years, year after year of famine, that at last we again find David inquiring of the Lord (2 Sam. xxi. 1). To go on without consulting the Lord is surely to go wrong, and certain to end in divine rebuke and chastisement. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding: in all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths" (Prov. iii. 5, 6).

VII.

Divine Guidance in New Testament Times.

THE ascent of the Lord Jesus to the right hand of God, and the consequent descent of the Holy Spirit to dwell in His living temple on earth, specially characterise this dispensation.

This was intimated by the Lord when He said: "It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away the Spirit will not come unto you, but if I depart I will send Him unto you" (John xvi. 7). The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit supersedes all the Old Covenant methods of guidance, such as the visible cloud in the wilderness, the Urim and Thummim, and the casting of the lot.

But even so the Lord's ways of guiding His servants under the new conditions of this dispensation are no less varied than of old, differing according to the character and experience of each individual. A special instance of divine guidance is recorded of the Apostle Paul in Acts xvi. 6-10. Forbidden of the Spirit to preach the word in Asia, and not suffered to go into Bithynia, he was next given the night-vision of two men of Macedonia, saying, "Come over and help us." We are not told how these prohibitions of the Spirit were intimated to him, whether by a prophetic utterance of one having the gift of prophecy, as in xiii. 2, or by some inward monition; but Paul, putting it all

together, assuredly gathered that the Lord was calling them to cross over into Macedonia. That his conclusion was correct is confirmed by all his subsequent experience. Later, in chapter xxi. 4, intimation was given to Paul by the Spirit through certain disciples that he should not go up to Jerusalem. But against all monitions to the contrary he went and suffered much in consequence. As has been remarked, this journey resulted in "an enraged populace, a trembling Felix, an almost persuaded Agrippa, but no record of a soul saved." That God could still direct in such ways need not be questioned, but the gift of prophecy having ceased, other methods are adopted by the Spirit now.

The operations of the Spirit are pre-eminently intelligent. It is "the eyes of the understanding" that He enlightens (Ephes. i. 18). He desires that the saints should be "filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" (Col. i. 9). This is something even higher than being led by impulses or circumstances. It is the result of intimate acquaintance with

the mind of God, acquired through the Spirit's teaching in the Word.

The exhortation in Ephesians v. 18, to be filled with the Spirit, finds its counterpart in Colossians iii. 16, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." Like the river that flows with perfect freedom, but always within the proper limits of its own channel, so in the leading of the Spirit there is liberty, but always within the limits prescribed by the Word of God. To assert that the Spirit is the author or leader in things that are contrary to the plain teaching of Scripture is to commit a grave error. Yet under cover of its being "of the Spirit," a place is given to women in public ministry that the Word never assigned to them; that which professes to be the gift of tongues is permitted and encouraged, even though no interpreter is present, and none could recognise the utterances to be like any known language; such confusion is gloried in, as men and women speaking, praying, singing all at one time, each trying to drown the voice of the other, whereas the Word is perfectly explicit as to what constitutes be-

coming order, "Let the prophets speak two or three . . . one by one . . . if there be no interpreter, let the one be silent who has the gift of tongues . . . God is not the author of confusion, but of peace." The exercise of spiritual gifts must be in subjection to the expressed will and authority of the Lord (see 1 Cor. xiv. 22-33).

Isaiah writes concerning Jehovah's Servant the Branch, "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make Him of quick understanding [or quick scented] in the fear of the Lord" (Isa. xi. 2, 3). Here are the qualifications for divine guidance. It is all of the Spirit. But it is by means of the Word. Not the Word apart from the Spirit, nor the Spirit apart from the Word, but the renewed mind moulded and formed by the Word under the teaching of the Spirit.

Of such as make it their aim to be habitually thus guided, it may be said that "by reason of use their senses are exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. v. 14).

They become "quick scented in the fear of the Lord," a beautiful figure taken from the hound scenting its prey. They discern in an instant whether the suggested course is good or evil, whether it is of the spirit or of the flesh; they instinctively choose the good, and refuse the evil.

The grand prerequisite of all true guidance is "the fear of the Lord." Where this is there will be meekness of spirit: "The meek will He guide in judgment; the meek will He teach His way." "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him" (Psa. xxv. 9, 14). Where the fear of the Lord is there will be readiness to obey. "If any man be willing to do His will he shall know" (John vii. 17). The guided one may be counted a fool by the world, but God would have none of His children to act foolishly. The spirit which He has given to us is "not the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound [or wise] mind" (2 Tim. i. 7). These three things ought to form the texture of every Christian's life. Alas! how often instead of power there is evident weakness; instead of love there is rather jealousy and

estrangement; instead of a sound mind, haste, folly, and imprudence. Invaluable is the preacher's advice: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart . . . in all Thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths" (Prov. iii. 5, 6). "I will guide thee with Mine eye" clearly implies that the eye of the one guided is ever looking toward the eye of Him who guides. There is no compulsion about such guidance. It means intimate and continuous communion. Concerning the Temple at Jerusalem, the Lord answered Solomon's prayer by promising, "Mine eyes and Mine heart shall be there perpetually" (2 Chron. 7. 16). Is the same not true of every living temple, every believer's body indwelt by the Spirit? Those eyes of love are ever bent toward the objects of His care, and it is he who keeps looking off unto Jesus who will know how much of grace and mercy and peace this never-failing watchfulness over us secures.

Animals employed in the service of man are necessarily guided by force. They have no understanding of their master's mind, therefore the horse and the mule must be

under constraint of the bit and the bridle, and the oxen must bear the yoke upon their necks. What a contrast is the service of a loving wife or an obedient son. The husband may be far away and consultation impossible, but by long association the wife has learned her husband's mind, and knows what course he would adopt under the circumstances, and so acting she pleases him. The son may have to act apart from his father, but trained up in serving him, and having acted at all times in rectitude and honour, he pursues the same course in the presence or absence of his father, and so has his approval. It is somewhat in this way that the obedient child of God learns the mind and will of his Father and his Lord, and acts instinctively so as to please Him.

But how many there are who, wise in their own conceits, lean to their own understanding and turn to their own ways. They seek their own will, and to please themselves more than their Lord. Is it any wonder that their way is hedged up with thorns? (Hosea ii. 6). "All these things are against me" is the language of their hearts, while

the very circumstances so murmured against are the restraints of a faithful Lord to curb self-will and turn into paths of righteousness.

Sometimes a certain course or act is forcibly impressed upon the mind. This may or may not be of the spirit, and requires to be tested as to its true origin by the Word of God and prayer. Some seem almost to hear a voice behind them saying, "This is the way; walk ye in it" (see Isa. xxx. 21). Very various are the Lord's ways of guiding, and the experience of one is no rule for another. The great thing is honestly to seek the knowledge of the Lord's will, and to be ready promptly to obey.

VIII.

The Righteous and the Wicked.

THERE are here two distinct classes, viz., "the wicked," and over against these are those "that trust in the Lord"—"the righteous" and "the upright in heart." The first correspond with the unregenerate, the ungodly, the unrighteous, and sinners; the unbelieving of the New Testament.

Their Old Testament designation is "the wicked," or "the ungodly," or "the unrighteous," each term being a description of their character before God. The two classes are never confounded in Scripture.

The flood was brought upon "the world of the ungodly" (2 Peter ii. 5). The inhabitants of Sodom are named "the wicked" (2 Peter ii. 7) On the contrary, Noah was righteous before God, and Lot, though unless we were told it in Scripture we should never have supposed it, was "just Lot," "that righteous man," "the godly one" (see 2 Peter ii. 7, 8, 9).

In 1 Peter iv. 17, 18, we have on the one hand "the house of God" and "the righteous" set over against "them that obey not the gospel," and "the ungodly and the sinner." The nation of Israel, though in covenant relationship with Jehovah, being the circumcised seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, was never all righteous. That is a distinction reserved for them in a future day (see Isaiah lx. 21). When the Lord Jesus appeared He distinguished between those who were His sheep and those that were

not. The two classes existed in the nation of Israel all along. In Psalm i. there is the godly man known by his manner of life, and the ungodly, who are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

Similar conditions obtain now in the kingdom of God in its outward aspect. There are the tares and the wheat, the tares representing those that offend and that do iniquity, whose end is the furnace; the wheat those who are righteous and who shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father (see Matt. xiii. 38-43).

"Many sorrows shall be to the wicked." "The way of transgressors is hard." The devil is a hard master, and the wages of sin is death. There are times when the tried believer is tempted to envy the foolish; he sees the wicked prosper and spread himself like a green bay tree, whilst waters of a full cup are wrung out to the righteous. But in the sanctuary, where their end is seen, all becomes plain. The believer finds that he is still with God, the subject of His loving care and faithful discipline, guided by His counsel here, and afterwards to be received

into glory. In view of all this he sings, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee: my flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever" (see Psalm lxxiii. 23-26).

In this present age prosperity in earthly things is less than ever an evidence of the divine favour. God hath chosen the poor of this world rich in faith. Having nothing, he possesses all things. He that trusteth in the Lord will ever find that mercy compasses him about. He can sing—

> "With mercy and with judgment
> My web of time He wove,
> And aye the dews of sorrow
> Were lustred with His love."

He knows that all things work together for good to them that love God, and has the joy of proving this to be true in many a trying, yet blessed, experience. The witness of the saints in all ages confirms the Word of God as to the blessedness of trusting in the Lord.

"Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, ye righteous." Well may those be glad and rejoice in the Lord who by Him are reckoned

righteous. God Himself is their Justifier: in His sight they are "clean every whit": no stain of guilt is left on those whom the blood of Christ has cleansed. The apostle's exhortation to the Philippian saints is "Rejoice in the Lord alway," and again he adds, "Rejoice." The gospel brings glad tidings, and it is a poor testimony if he who has believed it is not rejoicing. To "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory," was the experience of the tried and suffering saints to whom Peter wrote. To the Thessalonians the word came "in much affliction with joy of the Holy Spirit." Surely "light is sown for the righteous and gladness for the upright in heart."

To be "upright in heart" is an advance upon being righteous. Many are righteous before God, such as Lot in Sodom, who could not be called "upright in heart." This implies a holy integrity that esteems all His precepts in all things to be right, and hates every false way. It is those who thus prove the will of God to be "good and acceptable and perfect" that are called upon to "shout for joy."

Unbelief, worldliness, self-indulgence, are elements that cloud and chill the experience of the child of God. He seeks satisfaction in the things of time and sense instead of in Christ and His service and worship. Like Israel of old, brought out of Egypt, and fed with bread from heaven, Jehovah's resources were theirs, and for a time they rejoiced. "Then believed they His words, they sang His praise." But ere long they turned back in heart to Egypt, they wanted something else beside the manna. They lusted after Egypt's fare, the leeks and onions, and garlick, and melons, and cucumbers, with the fish and the flesh, and the heavenly bread they despised "Our soul loatheth this light bread." Alas! they are in a poor case. The Christian who has not the joy of the Lord is spoilt for both worlds. He cannot enjoy the world or the pleasures of sin like the worlding, and if he has not spiritual joy he must be miserable indeed. It is written that God gave Israel flesh to eat. He that gathered least gathered ten omers, and they ate it till they well nigh choked over it. Yet it is never said they were satisfied. But again it

is written, "The people asked, and He brought quails, and satisfied them with the bread of heaven" (Psalm cv. 40).

He who rejoices in the Lord and shouts for joy will ever be one who feeds on Christ, "the bread of God," "the bread of heaven," "the bread life," as found in the scriptures which testify of Him. He will be one who knows what prayer is, and who communes with God, and he will be one who delights to do the will of God and to be well pleasing to the Lord. May God grant unto us that uprightness of heart which so pleases Him, and which yields such precious fruit in the experience of the child of God.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH.

"THE God of glory appeared to our father Abraham" (Acts vii. 2). Notice the beginning of Abraham's career. He was a poor idolater, living amongst a people that worshipped idols. But God made choice of him, and revealed Himself to him. He saw what every saved person has seen; for have they not beheld "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ?"

That sight given to Abraham of the "God of glory" called him forth from his environments, from his interests and objects, from his friends and relatives, from everything in the world. "He went forth not knowing whither he went" (Heb. xi. 8). As God said to Noah, "*Come* [not *go*] thou into the

ark," so He says to Abraham, "Get thee out, . . . I will *show* thee" (Gen. xii. 1). It meant that God was with him. Abraham did not know the way, but God had said, "I will show you the land," and he went out in "the obedience of faith." If we went out in that way at our very first start with the Lord Jesus, it is "the obedience of faith." We have but one Person to please, and wherever He calls us that is the place of blessing. Anywhere with Jesus is pleasing; anywhere without Him is misery.

Take another instance, "And Abraham said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, . . . for we be brethren" (Gen. xiii. 8). Abraham was concerned for the honour of the Name of the God that he served and worshipped, and as he thought of the Canaanite and the Perizzite looking on, he thought, "Oh, what a dishonour to that Holy Name if Lot and I, who profess to be worshippers of the same God, are found quarrelling!" Oh, that there was more of that holy jealousy for His Name in the hearts of His people to-day! The Canaanite and the Perizzite are

in the land, and we have not been ashamed to fight before them. We have need to get low down before God. Abraham says, "Let there be no strife. . . . Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right, or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left" (verse 9).

Abraham was by far the older man; he was the uncle of Lot; had he not therefore a good right to make the choice? Yes, looking at it after the flesh, Abraham had the best right, but the vision of "the God of glory" (Acts vii. 2) still shines in his heart; his eyes are upon Him, and he says, "I will let Lot have the choice."

"And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar. . . . And they separated themselves the one from the other" (verses 10, 11). A gracious, friendly separation was far better than a contention.

Was Abram a loser? There is a word in Philippians iv. 5, "Let your moderation [yieldingness] be known unto all men."

If a man yields up his right for the glory of God, God won't be his debtor. He will not let him be a loser.

"And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward; for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever." Abram might have contended for his right, but he surrendered it lest any dishonour should come upon the Name of his God. And immediately the Lord comes in with such gracious promises and assurances of His friendship and His love.

Dear young believer, if you start as Abram did, and if you yield up your rights—things you would like, things you have coveted and cherished—if you give them up for Christ, He will pour His love into your heart, but you never will know it unless there is the denial of self. Remember that word

of the Lord, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself" (Luke ix. 23).

Pass on next to Genesis xiv. 22, 23, "And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the Most High God, the possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take anything that is thine, lest thou shouldest say I have made Abram rich." Here was another giving up. Abraham had done a mighty service for the king of Sodom. The king of Sodom was a captive in the hands of the kings of Shinar, Ellasar, Elam, and of the nations. Abram delivers him and brings back the whole company with all the goods and everything taken.

Judging according to the flesh, Abram might well have thought that as he had done a great service he might well claim a goodly portion of what he had secured. That is how the flesh would have looked at it. But the words of Melchisedec are ringing in his ears, "Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, the possessor of

heaven and earth" (verse 19). God is his—"God" and "heaven and earth"—therefore he is not dependent on the king of Sodom, and when the king of Sodom offers the whole thing, he accepts only the portion of *the men* that went out with him, "let them take their portion" (verse 24). There had been a transaction between him and the Most High God, there had been a lifting up of his hand, "I won't take anything except God gives it to me."

Young men, young women, it may be that Satan will come to you very soon with an offer of worldly advantage. You say, "Here is a good bargain, just a little crookedness and I can make it mine," and you are down before the king of Sodom, down before the devil. Let there be a transaction between your soul and the Lord Jesus Christ about your daily duties. "I won't take anything unless God gives it to me. He will give me what He sees I need. He is no niggardly master." He will supply our wants most abundantly and blessedly, but He wishes us to be true to Him.

Again, I ask, was Abraham a loser?

Read the next chapter, "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward" (Gen. xv. 1). What a reward! Not all things in heaven and earth, but the God that made them all and possessed them all. "I am thy reward."

Verily, when we see that God is for us, that the Lord Jesus Christ is ours, and all that He has is ours, we can afford to be straight up and down and not descend to shady things to improve our position in the world. "The Most High God, the possessor of heaven and earth," is our God still.

Turn now to Genesis xxii. 1-3. "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest." Some of us know what it is to have an only son, but none of us ever had a son in whom so much was centred as in the son of Abram. He was the son of the promise, long waited for, and come at last. He had grown up a pleasant child, his very name meant "laughter," he was the laughter of the father's house, he was the joy of the home. Oh! what words fell on his ears when he heard from the God he had loved and served all these years, "take now

thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest." God knew his love. In all the history of this world and the experiences of sin there never was an offering that was as like God as that. Only of God can it be said, "He gave His only begotten Son" (John iii. 16). He spared the son of Abram; He spared not His own dear Son.

There never was, in fact I do not see how there could be, a severer test of faith and obedience. God knew the strain He could put upon Abram. You know when a railway bridge or viaduct is built it is tested by sending a lot of railway engines across it, far more weight than it is ever likely to bear. But the man that built the bridge knows it will bear it right well, and the engineers are not afraid to cross on the engines.

God prepared this test of Abram's faith, and He knew what it would bear. He will not suffer you, believer, to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will make a way of escape. But, oh! mark, it is for the obedient one. Abram was straight up and down, perfectly true and obedient.

What follows? "And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen" (verse 14). Jehovah-jireh is "the Lord will *see*," or "the Lord will *provide*." Mark the connection between the two words. If the Lord sees, that means He will provide.

Was Abraham sorry that he had obeyed God? (Read verses 15-18.) "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed My voice." Oh, what a recompense! Sometimes in the path of obedience we say our flesh and heart faint and fail; we do not feel able to confess His Name among this company; I am not able to speak to that or this one about his or her soul. You will never deny self and obey God but the Lord will come in and reveal Himself to you, and bless you in your soul.

But there must be the denial of self. Either self must rule or Christ must rule. The question is, Is the trend of my life to be how I can please myself? or is it to be, I will deny self, take up the Cross, and become a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ?

UNION WITH CHRIST:

ITS MEANING AND ITS MESSAGE.

"I AM crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. ii. 20). I take this verse to begin with as indicating the truth that I want to speak upon. The apostle here speaks of his having been "crucified with Christ:" nevertheless he lives; yet not he; not the old Saul of Tarus, but Christ liveth in him. A new life is imparted to him, and that life is after the image of Christ. Now, every-one of us by nature has been identified with the first man, Adam. God only sees two men; He sees "the first man" and "the Second Man." God does not see a gradual development from tadpoles up to monkeys, and then from monkeys up to man. God created one man the head of the race. That one man sinned, and in him the whole race is looked upon by God as having sinned, and having fallen, and having died.

You find that perfectly wrought out in the fifth chapter of the epistle to the Romans. There you will find the two heads—the headship of Adam, in whom the whole race is regarded as having sinned and fallen, consequently the whole race is partaker of his corrupt nature. You see there also the Head of the new race; the Second Man, the One of whom Adam was the type, "the figure of Him that was to come." Adam, the head of a corrupt and fallen race, under condemnation and subject to death, was the figure of Him that was to come—the Head of a new race who in Him inherit righteousness, eternal life, and everlasting glory. In the one we are fallen, in the other we are risen; in the one condemned, in the other righteous; in the one corrupt, in the other created anew in righteousness and true holiness.

Oh, what a difference between the old and the new, the first man and the Second! What a mercy that God has in His sovereign grace taken us out from our standing in the first man and given us our standing in Christ, the Second Man!

Crucifixion expresses the curse of the broken law, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal. iii 13); "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us" (Gal. iii. 13). Crucifixion was not a death ever inflicted by the Jews; it was a cruel Roman penalty; nevertheless God in His providence appointed that in this way the Lord Jesus should be put to death, for it had been written long before, "Cursed is every one that hangeth upon a tree." He therefore, "being made a curse for us," bore the curse of the broken law. But a sentence of death could only be passed upon those who had been PROVED guilty. "He that believeth not is condemned already" (John iii. 18). The unbeliever to-day is not upon his trial; he is not having a time of probation; he is "condemned already;" he has been found guilty.

God took four thousand years to prove the Adam nature; to prove whether it was possible to attain righteousness in the flesh. God proved man under many different dispensations and in many different ways, but

with the same result in every case. It was impossible for him to become righteous before God. If righteousness could have been attained by the law, then there would have been no need for Christ to die. But God proved after four thousand years testing that the heart of man was enmity against Him. That was brought out to the full in the reception that was given to His own beloved, glorious Son. He was "God manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. iii. 16), but the world hated Him, and put Him to death. The cross therefore was the end of the world as to its trial, testing, and probation. That, I believe, is the meaning of Hebrews ix. 26, "Now once in the end of the world [or at the consummation of the ages] hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." It was an end in God's sight of all testing and all endeavour to get any fruit from man; it was "the end of the world" in that sense; therefore mankind, looked at as condemned, was sentenced to death, and every unbeliever at the present moment is under sentence of death.

When a man is tried by the criminal law

of this country and found guilty by a jury of his own countrymen he is sentenced to death, but the judge gives him so many days, it may be twenty-one or twenty-eight days, in which, as he says, "to make his peace with God." It is a season of grace given to him, a few weeks respite in which, if the man is so minded, he may seek and find salvation. These days in which we live are precious days; days of grace. The world is condemned, the sentence has gone forth against it, its doom is hastening on, but from the death of Christ till the present moment are days of grace. It is "the acceptable year" (Luke iv. 19); it is the holding back of the execution of judgment; it is "God not willing that any should perish" (2 Peter iii. 9); it is God beseeching sinners to "be reconciled to Himself" (2 Cor. v. 20).

It is well that we should be clear about this. The Gospel does not put men upon their trial; it finds men condemned and sentenced, and brings to them a proclamation of free pardon and everlasting life through the finished work of God's dear

Son. It is God in the attitude of a suppliant, beseeching sinners to be reconciled to Himself. But the moment a man does believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, what a change takes place. Instead of being regarded as one of those who took part in the murder and crucifixion of Christ, he is looked upon by God and reckoned by God as one for whom Christ died; as one who died with Christ, who was crucified with Christ. "I am crucified with Christ," says Paul.

The believer's union with Christ begins with quickening. Union with Christ does not begin as long as man is in the flesh; union with Christ is not the portion of the unsaved and the unregenerate. There is a doctrine abroad nowadays that would make out all men to be united to Christ, that Christ has by His incarnation and death, and resurrection, raised up all men; but that is not the teaching of Scripture.

The believer's union with Christ begins with quickening by the Holy Ghost; but before this could take place the Lord Jesus Christ, the spotless Son, the Substitute for

the sinner, must identify Himself with the fallen race. He becomes "a partaker of flesh and blood" (Heb. ii. 14), because the children that He was to redeem were partakers of flesh and blood. He did not come and become partaker of angelic nature, but He came and took on Him the seed of Abraham. He was truly man. He came so near to us that He, as Kinsman, had the right to redeem, but not so near that He was involved in the corruption or the fall of the first man, Adam. Had He been naturally a child of Adam, like any other man, He must have inherited the taint of sin and corruption, and He would thus have been disqualified for being the Redeemer. The body prepared for Him was begotten by the power of the Holy Ghost. Born of the Virgin, but called "the Son of God," that body saw no corruption. We never read of the blessed Son of God being sick; He suffered, but never from diseases. He took the diseases of others and healed them. He suffered as no man ever suffered, or ever could suffer, so that He knew what suffering was, but there was no taint of sin or corruption.

Thus was He fitted in every way to be the Redeemer, and to be the High-Priest—"holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners" (Heb. vii. 26). He came and identified Himself with the fallen race. "He was numbered with the transgressors" (Isa. liii. 12). He went with John to Jordan to be baptised by him, and was there, as it were, in the midst of a crowd of publicans and sinners confessing their sins and being baptised by John; but God differentiated between Him and all the rest. "He said, suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness" (Matt. iii. 15). He must be numbered with the transgressors, although He was infinitely separate from them. And a Voice came from heaven marking Him off from all the crowds about, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. iii. 17). Thus He became identified with us, and when He goes to the cross our sins are laid upon Him, "God who knew them laid them on Him." He "caused to meet upon Him the iniquity of us all;" "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities,

the chastisement of our peace was upon Him" (Isa. liii. 5), our Substitute. We see it, we believe it, we rejoice in it; it gives us peace, liberty, gladness to know that He took our place and bore the very last stroke of judgment for us.

But God reckons more; He reckons that I died with Him, that I was crucified with Him, that I passed through the judgment passed on Him, as though my hands and my feet had been nailed to that tree with His. God reckons that I died with Him, that every believer died with Him, having been crucified with Him. That life derived from Adam has received its death sentence, and the death penalty has been executed upon me in Christ.

What more could the law do? It has cursed Him and killed Him, and there is an end of it. "Ye therefore are become dead to the law by the body of Christ;" the body of the dead Christ taken down from the cross shows me that the law can do nothing more to Him, and therefore condemnation can have no place upon me. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom.

viii. 1). Blessed refuge, blessed place of rest for the heart and for the conscience; no condemnation, it is all past and past for ever, and God tells you now "reckon ye also yourselves to have died indeed unto sin." I am to reckon as He reckons. I am not to reckon something that is not true—that has never taken place. The fact is that God no longer sees a believing one as in the old Adam; his connection with the old Adam has been brought to an end at the cross. God now sees him in the new man. He is one with Christ, "quickened together with Christ" (Eph. ii. 5); raised up with Christ, and now Christ lives in him. It is not the old Adam that lives now, though the old corrupt nature cleaves to him still; but that is only for a time; we will get rid of it by-and-by. But the new life is there, as like to Christ as the old life was like Adam. A life that is as really of Christ and from Christ as the former life was of and from Adam. It is perfectly clear from these many scriptures that now we are beyond the death sentence; that we have passed through it in the death and through the grave of Christ.

Look at Romans vi., verses 1 and 2. "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead [died] to sin, live any longer therein?" Sin in this chapter is personified. It is spoken of as a person that had dominion over us, as a slave-driver, a hard taskmaster. "The way of transgressors is hard," and the sinner finds out that sin is a hard master to serve.

Verse 3. "Know ye not, that so many of you as were baptised into Jesus Christ were baptised into His death?" Baptism was a figure of death and burial and resurrection, and I believe it is Satan's device to pervert the ordinance, in which the young believer should immediately see that he is one with Christ in resurrection. Infant sprinkling is a device of Satan to keep believers from knowing their standing in Christ.

Verse 4. "Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death." The river, the baptistry, or wherever it be that the believer is baptised is for the time being a grave. It typifies the grave of Christ, and the believer as a dead man is buried with

Him. We would not bury a living man knowingly, but the men that God reckons "dead with Christ" are put into the grave with Christ, and thus rise up in the consciousness that they are quickened or made alive and risen with Christ. That is the teaching of the ordinance.

So it follows: "Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin" (verses 4-7). Blessed freedom! Liberated from bondage to sin. "He that is dead is freed from sin," or, as in the margin, "justified from sin." There used to be an old Scotch legal term indicating that when a murderer was hung he was said to be justified. It is just exactly the same thought. "Christ is the

end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." I think it was Richard Weaver who said "The end of the rope is the end of the law." Christ on the cross is the end of Adam.

Next look at Ephesians ii. 4, 5. "But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins." I think the separation of the verses here is a great pity. The love of God did not begin after He saved us. He loved us in our low and lost condition. The Lord Jesus Christ loved Saul of Tarsus when He died for him. He says, "He loved me, and gave Himself for me." And when He gave Himself for Saul, he hated the sound of His name. Nevertheless, He loved him. He knew what He would make of him; He knew what delight he would have in Him afterwards. He loved him and He looked forward to the joy he would have in Him. It is the same with every one who has believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. Each one is an individual personal subject of the love of God in Christ. Do not let us regard God's love or the love of the Lord Jesus

as if it were only in the mass. It is a special individual love.

An old Highland woman once stood at her cottage door. It was summer, and she shaded her eyes with her hand as she looked upward to the glorious sun, and said, "I've got a whole sun to myself." I could say the same. That is just one of the beautiful things of nature, that you have got as much as I have. In like manner you and I have individually the whole heart of Christ, and though there be millions of the redeemed, each one can appropriate the whole heart of Christ. There is room in that heart for them all.

Mark that word in the 1st of Revelation; "Unto Him that loveth us" (not loved us). I think it was Dr. Tregelles who said that he would not regret the whole long life's labour that he spent on examining the text of the ancient manuscripts of the scriptures if it had only been to make the one discovery that the verb there is in the present tense, "Unto Him that *loveth* us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood." He purged our sins because He loved us,

loved us from eternity, and He will love us to the end.

Verses 4-6. "But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved); and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." It is very helpful to remember that with God there is no past, present, or future. The Lord Jesus Christ used language that only God could use. "Before Abraham was, I am." There is no past, present, and future with Christ, or with God the Father, or with the Holy Spirit. Every one of us was crucified and died with Christ on the cross. Every one of us was quickened in the grave where Christ lay when He was quickened. Every believer is "quickened together with Christ."

Hosea, speaking about the restoration of Israel, says: "After two days He will revive us; in the third day He will raise us up and we shall live in His sight." Clearly this means that the future saved remnant of

Israel will have been quickened in the grave of Christ. The quickening of every saint of every dispensation is referred by God to the grave of Christ.

You know how beautifully the grains of oats or wheat are found upon the stem. I have counted 150 grains of oats upon one stem. But suppose these 150 grains had each a voice, and we asked each one, "Where were you quickened?" Each individual grain would say, "I was quickened in the grave of the one seed that fell into the ground and died some six months ago." And the whole 150 could say that they were all quickened out of that one seed that fell into the ground and died. The myriads of God's saints were all quickened in that grave of Christ. If He had not died He would have remained alone to eternity.

There are grains of wheat in the Egyptian mummies that have lain there 4000 years. Though living seed and capable still of bearing fruit they have not germinated. Why? Because they have not died. But take them out and sow them in the earth,

and let the earth cover them up as in a grave and let them die, and they will bring forth fruit to-day.

It was out of the death, out of the grave, out of the buried Christ that all His saints were quickened by the Holy Ghost, "quickened together with Him" (Col. ii. 13). No past, no present, no future. We are brought straight up to the cross, and we learn *all is an eternal present with God.*

Being "quickened together with Christ" (Eph. ii. 5), we have received the very nature of Christ. The life we have is eternal life, and if we want to see the character of that eternal life, John says, "We have seen the eternal life, we have handled it, we have looked upon it, that eternal life that was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." If any were to say, What is the life I have now got? What is the nature of it? What is it capable of? I look at the Scriptures on eternal life, and I learn that God has predestinated me "to be conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom. viii. 29). Oh! could God have thought of anything greater for us, could anything surpass it? He has

not predestinated us to be conformed to the image of Gabriel or Michael, glorious beings as these angels are, but it is to the image of the Lord of all angels, it is to the image of Christ, for Christ is the image of God.

Then comes in a little parenthesis. "By grace are ye saved" (Eph ii. 8). What attainment could ever have saved us? It is by grace, and grace alone, that God did this for us. It looks irrational. You hear the parable of the prodigal son, you hear about that young rascal that went and wasted his substance, and broke his father's heart. But he returns, and for him the fatted calf is killed, the ring is on his finger, guests called, music and dancing and rejoicing! What a way to treat such a wicked son; it is perfectly irrational, BUT IT IS GRACE. It is the love of the father's heart that is manifested thus, it is the father's joy to treat him thus; and it is grace that puts us in this wondrous place of privilege, it is grace that has put us into Christ, and he that is quickened with Christ is joined to the Lord. He "that is joined unto the Lord is one

spirit" (1 Cor. vi. 17). What interests have I got apart from Christ? What interest has my left hand apart from my right? Can I benefit the one hand without benefiting the other? Can I deprive the one hand of its nourishment without depriving the other of it? God has united us with Christ, and we have no interests apart from Him. His work in the world, His rights in the world, His testimony in the world, His love and light shining in the world—these are our interests, for we are one with Him, and we have no interest apart from Him. Oh, that we may enter into it. We do not. We have got our own separate interests that are contrary to His, and we cherish them, and these, as dear Robert Chapman used to say, "we have got a little concern of our own in a corner, and He brings His big wheel over it and smashes it altogether, because He wants us to enter into fellowship with Himself."

Quickened together with Christ, and raised up together with Christ, we are risen men and women. "Why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to

ordinances?" so wrote Paul to the Colossians (Col. ii. 20). As if I were to say to you some day when you are going along with a white umbrella and a green lining, why so, as if you were living in Egypt? You are not living in Egypt. Why, as though living in the world, are ye yet subject to ordinances? God does not count us as living in the world at all. We are separate from the world, we have been taken out of it, separated from it, and we are sent into it as Christ was sent into it—to be witnesses to it, and to live for God in it. We are not living in the world as part of it, we are living in the world as light in the midst of darkness, and as salt in the midst of corruption.

Look now at Colossians iii. 1, "If ye then be risen with Christ," and mark the connection here with the 12th verse of chapter ii.: "Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses."

Then chapter iii.: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." All our interests are transferred from earth to heaven. We have no interests in common with the first man, Adam; our interests are all bound up with the interests of the Second Man, Christ. This is beautifully illustrated by a little incident that once happened to me. I was visiting a friend in the country, who lived in a nice cottage, with a garden just large enough to attend to himself. He was very fond of his garden, and I went to visit him about March or April. I noticed as I passed round that the garden was all in utter disorder. He had not put a spade in it. He had not spent a quarter of an hour in it. I asked what is the meaning of this? You usually take such a pride in your garden. How is it that you are doing nothing at it? He said, "I am leaving this on the 28th of May. I am working in the garden of the house to which I am

going." It was all explained. What was the good of him spending labour on the garden he was going to leave on the 28th of May? It was very wise to go and work in the garden of the house he was going to.

You and I may leave before the 28th of May, we may leave this world and go right away up to be with Christ. What about all the anxiety and labour and travail; it is all lost. It is not that we are not to do our duty, we are to serve the Lord. We have earthly relationships in which to do what is right and honest, a man is to care for his wife and family. We have our relative duties to perform, and therefore to glorify God therein; but what weighs men down is the constant care and labour to get on, and get up, and get rich, and so on—men grinding the very lives out of themselves. And what does it amount to? Vanity of vanities! In a little while they are gone, and men say, "How much did he leave?" It is never how much did he take away with him? Let us lay up treasure in Heaven. "Set your affection on things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God."

There are all our interests. They are bound up with the glorified Christ, and when He comes we will just have what we have laid up in heaven. We will just have the life that we have lived for Him, we will just have the service that we have rendered Him. All that we have done apart from Him, not at His bidding, not in fellowship with Him, will just be so much lost. May it not be a whole lost life, but may it be a life that has largely been given to Him and spent in His service.

Another point or two, very shortly. Turn to Ephesians ii. 6: "And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Note that the preposition is changed. It is not as quickened with Him and raised with, but it is seated *in* Him. That means that Christ, seated in the heavenly places in the presence of the glory of God, is there as taking the place for us, who are coming shortly, and then it will not be seated in heavenly places *in* Christ, but when He comes we will be seated in heavenly places *with* Christ.

The last that I will touch upon, although the subject is far from exhausted, is Romans viii. 16: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, and, if children, then heirs." The Prince of Wales was heir to the throne as soon as he was born. He was just as much the heir the day he was born as he was the day the reigning sovereign died. He was the child, and therefore the heir. "If children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ." Joint-heirship with Christ. Inheritors of all that He has. Eve was joint-heir with Adam. Eve was together with Adam set in joint-authority over the world. Christ is the heir, and we are "joint-heirs with Him," and "all things are yours for ye are Christ's." Not all things are yours for Christ is yours, that is true, too; but it is, "all things are yours for ye are Christ's." We are His, the members of His body, the bride that He loves. "All things are yours," being joint-heirs with Him to all that He is heir to. "If so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together" (Rom. viii. 17). Because when we come to speak

of glory then we speak of something that has degrees in it. There are no degrees in eternal life. There are no degrees in the justification or the pardon, but when He comes to speak about glory, then one star differeth from another star in glory. There are degrees in glory, and the glory will be apportioned just according to the faithfulness here. Dear William Lincoln used to say, "the thick of the sufferings will be the thick of the glory." The one that has followed closest in His footsteps here will be closest to Him in the glory there. The sufferings pave the way for the glory, and "as He is, so are we in this world" (1 John iv. 17). We are just what He is, we cannot differ from Him. "The world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not" (1 John iii. 1). The world does not know us as children of God. The world may know my name and my business, and a good deal about me, but the world does not know aught of the mysterious eternal life that possesses me. It may think me queer, but it does not know the meaning of it, or the origin of it, or the hope of it, or what we shall be. It is all unknown to the

world. It is our privilege to go on here just as He was, and if the world will not have us, well and good, but, oh, how prone we are to shirk the cross, shirk the sufferings and barter the coming glory for a little human praise. Oh, may God show us the folly of it and the wickedness of it, and lead us to be more true to the One who loved us, and gave Himself for us.

THE MINISTRY OF CHRIST.

THERE are two distinct classes of ministry—one for those "that believe," and the other for those "that believe not" (1 Cor. xiv. 22); and these are never mixed up in the Scriptures. There is one distinct testimony to those "that believe not"—the preaching of THE GOSPEL. It may be to an individual; it may be to a crowd; it may be in a hall, a chapel, or other building; or even in the open air—it is one testimony, and that is the Gospel of God's grace whereby they may be saved. But when we come to ministering to those "who believe," it is the unfolding of the treasures that are found in THE WORD, and thus the Word of God from Genesis to Revelation becomes the subject of ministry to the children of God. The mixing up of these two forms of ministry has led to the gathering together "on the first day of the week" of great congregations of saved and unsaved. And very often no distinction is made in what is addressed to them. Sometimes they are ad-

dressed as if all were believers, at other times as if all were unbelievers. This is a serious evil, and it sets aside practically the scriptural gathering together on the first day of the week of those that are disciples: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together" (Heb. x. 25). This is not a promiscuous assembly. If one comes in, who does not know what is going on, there is to be an open door for him; he is to be welcomed. He may be an observer, though he does not form a part of that company, which is composed only of believers, disciples, saints, redeemed ones, who have the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let me illustrate this truth from the Book of Leviticus: "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, concerning the feasts of the Lord, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are My feasts" (chap. xxiii. 1, 2). Notice the words, "feasts of the Lord," and "holy convocations." They could not have a feast to the Lord every day; they could not have it even once a week in Israel. A convoca-

tion was a calling together of an assembly. These convocations the Lord calls Jehovah's feasts, for they were holy callings together of Jehovah's people to meet with Himself.

When God brought His people into the land of Canaan, He appointed certain occasions upon which all the men in Israel were to gather together at the place He appointed; He gathered His people all round Him; and He says, "This is My feast." In the days of the Lord Jesus Jehovah was not recognised in it; it was called "a feast of the Jews" (John vi. 4). But in the happy days we are reading of here they were Jehovah's feasts.

In the Psalms we learn how the people were glad when the feast day came on: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord" (Psa. cxxii. 1). They were glad when they were to go and feast with Jehovah, glad when the holy convocation day came, when the people met together. God made them glad on these occasions when they obeyed His Word.

Everything of that dispensation was

fashioned so as to suit the people who dwelt in that land; and God chose Jerusalem as the centre towards which the tribes could go up. But the dispensation is changed. It is not now a people of any particular land; the blessing is world-wide; God is gathering a people for Himself, by the Holy Spirit, "out" of every nation, people, kindred, and tongue (Acts xv. 14). Therefore there is no locality now to which His people are called to gather; but the Lord Himself gives us this precious instruction, that "where two or three"—it may be very few, it may be just two or three away in the heart of Africa, or in some inland town in China—"are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst" (Matt. xviii. 20). It may be two or three, or two or three hundred, or two or three thousand; but if they are gathered unto Him, if Christ is truly their object, then He says, "I am in the midst."

Look now at the three occasions on which God commanded Israel to go up to Jerusalem in the year. "Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto Me in the year. Thou shalt keep

the feast of unleavened bread" (Exod. xxiii. 14). The feast of unleavened bread was just another name for the feast of the Passover. Sometimes it is called the one, sometimes the other. The Passover was kept on the fourteenth day of the month; the feast of unleavened bread lasted from the fourteenth to the twenty-first. Look at Exodus xxxiv. 23: "Thrice in the year shall all your men children appear before the Lord God, the God of Israel. For I will cast out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders; neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord thy God thrice in the year."

You see what importance the Lord attached to these gatherings. He said, "*all the males.*" If the women were able to go they were at liberty to go, and the children too, but God only laid the responsibility on the men.

When God gives a command He clears the way for it. It might naturally enter into the hearts of the women, "What if an enemy come, and all our men are away?" "Oh," God says, "I will take

care of that. The enemy shall not desire your land when you go up, according to My word." So is it to-day: all we have to do is to obey God, and He will look after the consequences.

Now, what were the three occasions?

(1) The Passover. That takes us straight to the Cross of Christ, for "Christ is our Passover" (1 Cor. v. 7).

(2) The First-fruits. The day when they reaped the first sheaf of their fields they were to go up with that sheaf. That brings us to the resurrection of the Lord, for Christ is "the first-fruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. xv. 20).

(3) The ingathering at the end of the harvest. That takes us to the time when the Lord shall come to gather His own to be with Himself (1 Thess. iv. 16).

Of all the events that have ever taken place, nothing in the mind and heart of God compares with these three: (1) The death of His own beloved Son; (2) His glorious resurrection and triumph over all the powers of darkness; (3) His coming again to complete His victory, when "mortality shall

be swallowed up of life" (2 Cor. v. 4). God signified in type by those three gatherings in the year these three wonderful events that were to come.

What has He appointed now? Instead of three feasts in the year God gives to His people the higher privilege of a feast every "first day of the week" (Acts xx. 7). It is our privilege to come together to feast with the Lord, and to be conscious of His presence with us every first day of the week. The same three events are brought together and memorialised in our assembling thus as the Redeemed of the Lord. (1) We celebrate His death in the emblems upon the table; (2) we celebrate it on the first day of the week, the resurrection day; and (3) we keep it in the immediate hope of His coming again.

When the Lord instituted the Passover He said it was a feast to be kept "throughout your generations" (Exod. xii. 14); when He institutes the New Testament feast there was no mention of generations; it is, "Ye do show the Lord's death till He come" (1 Cor. xi. 26).

Closely connected with the coming together on the first day of the week is the subject of Christian ministry. Let me describe the difference between worship and ministry.

What is WORSHIP? You notice the expression twice over in Exodus, "None shall appear before Me empty." Whoever came before the Lord was to bring something for Him. To appear empty would be to say, "Jehovah has not blessed me." God would have His people come with full hands to testify that the Lord has blessed them; He would have us to come together with our hearts full of praise. Worship is that which goes up to God. It ascends from the heart by the power of the Holy Spirit, through the Lord Jesus, or in His Name, to the Father.

What is MINISTRY? Ministry comes down from God, by Christ, through the Spirit, to His children. Worship is upward; ministry is downward. The one is the ascending up of praise and adoration to God for what He is, for His goodness, for what He has done, and is doing; the other is the sending down by God of His Word for the comfort, edifica-

tion, strengthening, blessing, and sanctifying of His people.

"Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols" (1 Cor. xii. 1, 2). Notice they are called "dumb idols," that is, they were idols that could not speak. But we are brought to the living God, the God who has a voice, the God who speaks through His Word, bringing that Word in the power of the Holy Spirit home to the heart and conscience just as if it was a living voice speaking it.

"Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Spirit" (verse 3). Of course we know that does not mean with the lip only; it means that no one can from the heart acknowledge Jesus as Lord, but by the Holy Spirit. There is a time coming when every knee shall bow before Him, and every tongue confess Him (Phil. ii. 10, 11), and when even the demons shall acknowledge

Him Lord of lords, but it is only those who have the Holy Spirit who can now acknowledge that Jesus is the Lord.

Read now 1 Corinthians xii. 4 to 11. "Now there are diversities of gifts, . . . to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: but all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will. . . ." In this list of gifts there are a number that appear to have passed away. We do not have the gift of miracles, of healing, of tongues nowadays. I do not believe God intended these gifts to be permanent; I believe they were for the time being connected with the inauguration of a new age, a new dispensation. But there are those things that still remain in the Church, such as the power to edify one another. Whatever be the nature of the gift, whether the word of wisdom or the word of knowledge, the power to speak to edification from the Scriptures, the gift of the teacher, or the gift of the exhorter, we

find invariably that it is traceable to "the operation of the Spirit of God." There is no possibility of spiritual gift to the edifying of the body of Christ except through the operation of the Holy Spirit.

In order to prove this look at Acts xx. 28: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God." Who made them overseers? Was it the apostle Paul? was it the Presbytery? No; it was "the operation of the Holy Spirit of God."

To see how He operates turn to 2 Corinthians viii. 16: "But thanks be to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you." God put it into the heart of Titus earnestly to care for the children of God. Can a man make himself an overseer, or a shepherd, or a feeder of the flock? Can education make a man a shepherd or a feeder of the flock? Not unless God puts it into his heart, and the Holy Spirit endows him with the gift to do it. And whilst a man cannot by any amount of education get the gift, God can

make him fitted, though he has had little education, if any at all. "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus" (Acts iv. 13). That was their college. They sat at His feet, they heard His Word, they were instructed and empowered by His Spirit.

Is it not the same still? Look how Richard Weaver was used; look how Harry Moorhouse (by whose means D. L. Moody's eyes were opened to the love of God) was used; look how D. L. Moody was used. None of these men were college bred. God uses men of that stamp, and He empowers them by the Holy Spirit to do His work. A father cannot make his son a minister; it is not as the father wills. Nowadays, suppose a father has three sons, he says, "I think I will send the eldest to the law; the second one will suit best for business; the third we will make a minister." There is no question in the last case as to whether the son is saved or not, or as to whether the

sovereign will of the Holy Spirit is to make him a teacher or pastor.

Now, mark, I am saying nothing against those fitted. I believe there is many a man in the pulpit whom God has called and qualified. I am sorry they should be in a position not in accordance with the Word of God; but for the men themselves I have nothing but respect and esteem. Yet these men do not make up the bulk. Alas! we know how the pulpits and the professors' chairs are largely occupied by men practically infidels.

"But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ" (Eph. iv. 7). You see this grace to be a helper as a fellow-member of the body of Christ must come from the risen ascended Head. If Christ has not bestowed the gift, the man may be an eloquent speaker, but he has not the gift to edify the children of God. "And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some pastors and teachers" (verse 11). Christ gave them; man cannot make them.

Contrast this with a word in 2 Timothy

iv. 2, 3: "Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears." Christ may give His gifts, but the popular religion of to-day will not have the gifts that Christ bestows. No, they will heap to themselves teachers, but not God-given teachers.

It is our privilege to ask the Lord Jesus not only to send out labourers into the harvest, but also to give teachers able to instruct the children of God in the Word of God; not learned in new-fangled theories of the world, but in the truths of God.

"For the perfecting of the saints" (verse 12), so that each saint might be able to fulfil his own ministry, to do his own part for the edifying of the whole. For ministry is a wide word; and just as there is not one unnecessary member in my body, so there is not one unnecessary member in the body of Christ. Just as each member of the body has its function, and is necessary to the well-

being of the body, so every member of the body of Christ has his own function to perform. One man may be an evangelist. What is his work? To go to the unsaved and preach the Gospel to them. Another may be a teacher. What is his work? To open up the Word so that the children of God may understand the sense of it. Or another may be an exhorter, which is quite a different gift. The exhorter is a man who comes behind the teacher and clinches the nail the teacher drives in. Then there is the pastor (verse 11), one who goes from house to house and finds out the weak and suffering, and who will comfort and sympathise. That is another work altogether.

Man's way is, "Get one man to be the minister, and he will do it all. We don't grudge to pay a good salary so long as he does it all." God's way is, That every member has his own function to perform. Which, think you, is the better?

I hope I have not said anything that seems unkind or disrespectful, but I do not hesitate to expose the terrible evils abounding in these days, and to present to you the simple

Word of God that we may "prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Rom. xii. 2). "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ. From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which *every* joint supplieth [not some joints], according to the effectual working in the measure of *every* part [not just a few parts], maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Eph. 4. 15, 16). You see it is all from the Head; all the nourishment is in the Head, the Lord Jesus Christ; all the comfort is in Him; all the wisdom is in Him; all the enlightenment is in Him; it all must come from Him. And mark, in order to come from Him there must be a channel that is in touch with Him. That gaslight would go out if I inserted anything between it and the meter; I could turn it off in a moment; it cannot burn unless it is in connection with the source of supply. That is just another word for communion. Communion means one in communication with the Head; and the Head at God's right hand uses him

to speak words that edify, that sanctify, that comfort, that establish in the faith. That is the idea of ministry, and it is a high ideal.

It is not just that we come together and anybody speaks that likes. That would be just as completely setting aside the Word of God as to ministry as to ordain one man to preach and pay him for it. The Christian ministry is the ministry that the Christ has given, and no other; and to pretend to speak in the name of the Lord, and to put, as it were, upon the Holy Ghost words that are not for edification, words that may be felt by the believers to be an intrusion, is an insult to God. Oh, that each one who ministers in the assembly would see that he is in communion with the living Head, and that what he gives is really for edification, really for exhortation, really for comfort, and really for blessing.

CONFORMITY TO THE SON OF GOD.

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren" (Rom. viii. 28-31).

THIS is the purpose God has pledged Himself to fulfil to every individual believer. When He says, "All things work together for good to them that love God," it means that He is making all things work together toward the fulfilment of His purpose. Nothing can intervene to frustrate that purpose, for in the last words of the 30th verse we read: "Whom He justified, them He also glorified." It is not: "Whom He justified, them He also *will* glorify;" but it is put as if it were an accomplished thing. Justifying and glorifying are inseparably bound together in the purpose of God. As a matter of fact, we are not yet glorified, but it is so certain to be that God says it is already done. "He calleth those things that be not, as though they were" (Rom. iv. 17). That is God's prerogative.

Let us trace some of God's ways in working out His purpose. The operations of God are never merely external. Man can cleanse the outside; man can white-wash; man can do a great many merely external things; but when God works, He begins within; He begins the cleansing at the heart. The very first operation of the Spirit of God is in the heart. There God begins to work.

As in the days of Hezekiah, when the people began to cleanse out the temple, which had been neglected—for the lights had been out and the doors had been shut for years—there was a revival, and they went in and cleansed out first the very innermost part of it—the holy place. So God begins always within, and until He sets the conscience right with Himself about sin there is no work accomplished. All merely external cleansing is valueless to God. It is only that which begins in the heart and the conscience which is of God. He begins right at the core, and leads the believer who has known his sins forgiven, for Christ's sake, to say from that very heart, which before was filled

with enmity to God: "Abba, Father!" (Gal. iv. 6). Any man can teach you to say by rote: "Our Father, which art in heaven;" but only God, by His Spirit, can enable you to say it from the heart.

Look at one or two passages to prove that this purpose of God begins *within.*

Ephesians iv. 20: "But ye have not so learned Christ." This is the lesson of the believer's life; it is learning Christ. Then it goes on to say: "If so be that ye have heard Him, and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus." Jesus is the personal Name given to Him at His birth, and refers back to His life in the flesh upon earth. Just as the apostle Paul says: "That the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh" (2 Cor. iv. 11). That is, that the life that Jesus lived on the earth might be manifested in him.

Ephesians iv. 22-24: "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man.... And that ye put on the new man." Here we have the two men—the old and the new man.

As a key to this portion turn to the well-

known portion, John iii. Nicodemus had no other idea than that Christ meant by being born again the reproduction of the old man. But the Lord sets him right upon that head. Jesus says (verses 5 and 6): "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Here are two distinct things which the Lord Jesus puts for ever apart. As much as to say: "Now, Nicodemus, don't you confound natural with spiritual birth. They are perfectly distinct. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh;" that which is descended by natural descent is just Adam over again.

"That which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (verse 6). It is a new spiritual existence. It is not a thing you can handle. "The wind bloweth where it listeth" (verse 8). It is a spiritual thing, a spiritual birth, a new creation; but although it is spiritual, it is real, permanent, eternal, and you can judge of its nature by its effects.

There is a manifest change in the man

who is "born of the Spirit." It affects his whole being; there is a turn right round about which is called conversion. It is a new creation, it is a spiritual thing, it cannot be handled or seen or felt, but it is there, a mighty reality; it is permanent, eternal, and its effects are manifest in the man's whole life.

But "that which is born of the flesh" (verse 6) remains just as it was. There is conflict now; there is a double element in the man now; there is the old corrupt nature ever ready to spring up and manifest itself in all its Adam hideousness; and there is the new nature that reaches out towards God and heaven, that new life being "after the image of Him who created him" (Col. iii. 10).

When God created Adam it is said He made him in His own image. "In the image of God created He him" (Gen. i. 27). That image was marred through sin, and instead of man being in the image of God, the Lord Jesus tells men plainly they are of their father the devil, and the works of their father they do (John viii. 44). The image

of God has been lost to man through sin, but God begins by creating a new spiritual nature, which is after His own image.

It is a remarkable thing that at the conversion of any poor sinner there is manifest in the next half-hour the very lineaments of Christ. Take for instance the Philippian jailer. There he was, a hard unconverted man, thrusting the disciples into the inner prison, making their feet fast in the stocks, without the slightest concern for their lacerated backs or their sufferings, or whether they were hungry or cold, or anything else. But he is awakened during the night, convicted, brought to trust in the Lord Jesus; he is a saved man. At "the same hour" of the night (it looks as if it all happened within an hour); he brings them into his house; he does not fear to become identified with them; he washes their stripes and sets meat before them. He rejoices, believing in God, and he gathers his household around him to share the blessing; and that night his obedience is tested, for he goes out, and is baptised and comes into his house again (Acts xvi. 33). There we

see the very character of Christ—the love, the gentleness, the meekness, the Christian fervour, and the rejoicing in God's Word.

How often have we found that in the newly-converted person there was an instinctive drawing towards the child of God. If there is another child of God in the workshop, the new convert is drawn to that one. It is a sort of divine freemasonry. You will often find more real following after Christ in a young convert than in one who has been brought to Christ a few years before, and who has grown cold and begun to reason about this thing and that thing, and say: "Oh, they are not so bad after all," and begin to go back after things which in the first fervour of their love they felt instinctively to be wrong. What does this prove? It shows that at the moment of being "born again" "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit;" it is of God.

Colossians iii. 9-12: "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him; put on,

therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness." Put on Christ; put on the character of Christ. It is nothing more, nothing less. We read of His making "all things work together for good to them that love God." The end of His making them work together for good is to make us like Christ.

When the apostle is exhorting the Ephesian believers to follow the vocation to which they are called and is showing the exalted character of their calling, he says: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called: with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering" (Eph. iv. 1, 2). We do not like to suffer long; we forget how long God has suffered with us; yet, if we are to be like Christ we are to be long-suffering, and the one that can suffer longest is the strongest Christian. It is not the one who takes the platform, but the one that can bear long and patiently with his eye on God. Oh, how contrary to man's ideas of greatness, for there is nothing great in God's sight but likeness to His Son.

Unless you and I have begun by learning this, we have begun at the wrong end of the lesson book of God. There are some boys who, when they go to school, like to begin at the wrong end of their book; they think it is such a weariness to learn the ABC and the multiplication table, they would like to get on to fractions all at once. And some people like to get into the meetings to speak and take part in them, yet they have never got to the ABC—the meekness and long-suffering of the Lord Jesus Christ. Is it any wonder that instead of becoming gatherers they become scatterers?

These passages show clearly that God begins within, and that when a man becomes regenerated by the Holy Spirit a new spiritual nature is created in the image of Him who created it. It is the Christ-life, just as the first life he got was the Adam-life.

You ask me who I am like. I am like Adam. We are all like Adam by nature. There was an old minister in Glasgow called Dr. Muir. One day while visiting he called on a certain family. The mother

brought the new baby and showed him to the doctor. "Who is he like?" she asked. Dr. Muir looked at the baby for a little, and then answered: "Very like Adam." He had got to the root of the matter, and was in the secret of God's thoughts when he said it. It is "the image of the earthy" (1 Cor. xv. 49) that we bear by nature. But being "born again" we have a new nature, and it is in "the image of the heavenly." Our business is so to have the old Adam-life put off that we may not manifest the pride, the conceit, and the self-centeredness of the old man, but that we may manifest the meekness, the gentleness, and the affection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I could speak of a few I have been acquainted with. I never saw them fly into a rage or speak evil of other people. I always found their words edifying and comforting; and somehow, while they attracted me to them, there was something in their whole demeanour that searched my heart; there was something that drew me nearer to Christ. Oh! there is nothing in the world like it. If you want to be of use

in the world, to be a witness for God in the world, seek this thing: "to be conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom. viii. 29).

I find that the great hindrance to the Gospel, and the great hindrance to many precious truths taking effect on the hearts and consciences of unbelievers, is the un-Christlike lives of those who profess the truth. Oh! give me a hundred people that are making it the business of their lives to be "like Christ"—reading His Word, and crying to God to show them the right way—and I will show you a place where there will be a permanent revival.

Take another passage showing the method of this working in our lives, 2 Corinthians iii. 15: "But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart." The reference here is to the vail that Moses put over his face, because the brightness of his face made the children of Israel afraid to come and listen to the words of his mouth. Even to this day, when the Jew is reading the books of the Old Testament, "the vail is upon their heart." It is not on the face of Moses, but on their own hearts. And

when they read the books of the Old Testament they see nothing but ceremonies, while you and I see Christ. "Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away" (verse 16). When the poor down-trodden remnant shall turn to God the vail shall be taken away. So when the poor sinner turns to the Lord the vail is gone. Instantly he gets a full sight of the unvailed glory of God in the face of Jesus.

"Now the Lord is that Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (verse 17). That is, liberty into the presence of God, and no child runs to its father with more certainty of liberty than you and I into the presence of our Father in heaven. It is not presumption; it is the privilege of the begotten child.

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass [reflecting as a mirror] the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (verse 18). That word is in contrast to the "vailed face." Moses went up into the mount to receive God's instructions about the building of the

Tabernacle. He was forty days in the mount—nearly six weeks. There, in the presence of God, his face was, as it were, drinking in the glory of God.

I have seen a matchbox that has on the top a preparation of phosphorus. If you put that box into the sun in the middle of the day it drinks in the sun's rays, so that when you put it into your room in the middle of the night it shines out visibly. That is the idea; it is drinking in. Moses was in the presence of God six weeks ere he came down from the mount, and his face was a reflection of the glory of God. And yet it was only the skin of his face that shone, it was only skin deep. Is that the character of the reflection of the glory that is produced in one who has been in the presence of God, beholding His glory in the face of Jesus Christ? No! It is a different thing; it is deeper than a skin-deep reflection. It is not that we go out from the presence of God merely having put on an external likeness to Christ, it is deep down in the inner man. We have been strengthened by meeting Him; we have been renewed and stimulated with heavenly

vitality, and we go out to manifest "the virtue of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvellous light" (1 Peter 2. 9). But that glory will only shine out as you and I abide in the presence of God. The Christian who does not reflect the lowly character of Christ; the Christian who thinks he can do without the Word and prayer will be a poor representative of Christ.

Have you ever seen as you looked toward the east with your back to the setting sun and your eyes fixed on some distant house, that the windows of that house were so lighted up that you thought the house was on fire? What made the windows shine out so gloriously? It was simply that they were reflecting the setting sun. What makes the full moon shine so brightly? Is it anything in the moon itself? Nothing whatever. The moon itself is utterly black. Where then does it get its glory? It is simply this: that when the sun has passed from our sight and it is night, the moon has got its face to the sun and reflects the light of the sun. It is just a big mirror reflecting the glory of the sun

on to the earth. That is what you and I are called to be; reflectors of Christ, so that the world may see Christ in us. Then they will not be able to say, "I do not like these Christians, their behaviour is not like Christ."

I was hearing recently of a man who professed several years ago to be a Christian. He went abroad and made a fortune, and now has an income of several thousands a year. There is not a word of Christ now; his life is a disgrace for any Christian to live. There was an eclipse in his life. It is like the eclipse of the moon, a shadow creeps over and over it until there is nothing but a little halo in sight to show where it is. What is it that cuts off the moon's light? It is this world coming in between the sun and the moon. Ah! the world can come between the Christian and his Sun just like that until the lineaments of Christ's character are blotted out and He is not known from the worldly man. That is what happens. So when you find yourselves where you cannot be in the presence of God, just make up your mind, "I will not be there if I cannot take Christ with

me." Get out of it at once. It will keep you clear of the public-house, the theatre, and many more questionable things and places; it will keep you clear about many things of which others say, "What is the harm?" You will say, "I cannot tell what the harm is, but I cannot take Christ there with me." Let that settle every question.

"One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after," says the Psalmist, "that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple" (Psa. xxvii. 4). He had made up his mind. One thing he sought after, and that is the most definite object in life; and that was that He might abide in the presence of God. In that way we will be a Christlike people, and the world will take knowledge that we have been with Jesus.

Look next at 1 Corinthians xv. 47-49: "The first man is of the earth, earthy: the Second Man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we

have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." That is not merely His likeness within; that is not merely His character shining out in us, but spirit, soul, and body all conformed to the image of God's Son. Nothing short of this will satisfy the heart of God. God's work is only begun in us. We have received "the salvation of our souls," but not yet the salvation of our bodies. That is yet to come. But the pattern to which God will conform every-one of us is His own Son, risen from the dead and glorified.

"As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." God has purposed it, and it is to take place. The bodies we shall have then will be spiritual bodies. "Handle Me, and see; a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as you see Me have" (Luke xxiv. 39). Christ had a spiritual body. It was a body, but it was such that He could go in at the doors though they were locked, and He could sit at the table and break bread with the two disciples. They did not know Him on the

way to Emmaus, but their eyes were opened, and He vanished out of their sight. He was teaching them that though they did not see Him, He was always present with them. So that, though the Lord Jesus is on the throne of God, yet in some mysterious way He is with His people too.

He was in a spiritual body. I do not believe the stone was rolled away from the sepulchre to let Him out, but to show the disciples He had risen, and was not in the tomb. All the powers of darkness could not hold Him, nor rock, nor stone. His was a spiritual body; He could go up as well as down. That is a manifestation of the body God is going to give us; and He is going to do it Himself.

Philippians iii. 20: "For our conversation [our citizenship] is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." It is the heavenly Jerusalem that is going to come down from God by-and-by. That is the city I am a citizen of. You and I may live in Glasgow, but we are no more citizens of Glasgow than anyone who has come from abroad in a foreign ship. We are

strangers and pilgrims, and we have no right to interfere with politics. Our politics are heavenly; it is the kingdom of God we are waiting for.

"Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" (verse 21). When the translation was given us, "vile" meant humble; now it has acquired the meaning of "a wicked person." "Our vile body" means simply "the body of our humiliation." It is not a vile body, it is a body that is wonderfully made; it is a body that belongs to Christ; it is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and "Ye are not your own." Only think of His being able to subdue all things to Himself; able to subdue my stubborn will to Himself; able to subdue this body, with all its corruption and pains and aches, to Himself. Nothing will content Him till He has got the Church "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing" (Eph. v. 27). The Church will be presented to Christ by Himself;

presented perfect and glorious. What will be its glory?

2 Thessalonians i. 9, 10: "He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe," *i.e.*, it is the beauty of the Saviour that shall dazzle every eye; it is His beauty, His character, His life, His likeness, that everybody wakes up with admiration to see.

That which shall delight the heart of God will delight every being in fellowship with God. Each saint is to be a reflection of the glory of the Son of God. You have gone out on a summer morning when the sun was shining, and you have seen that every blade of grass had its own drop of dew, which sparkled so brightly. What made it so bright? It was simply the drop of dew reflecting the sun. It is just the old law of reflection over again. The glory of Christ reflected in every believer will be our glory then, and should be our glory now.

We speak about the coming of the Lord and the joy of being with Him and being like Him and seeing Him as He is, but is it truthful if we are

not seeking to be like Him now? If we are not seeking to be beholding His glory now, do you think the Lord will acknowledge the hymns we sing and the nice things we say? He will say: "I want reality. You say you want to be like Me when I come in My glory, but are you longing to be like Me this very day?"

In conclusion let me ask: Are you going forward from this day determined to be like Him to-morrow. Oh, that is the very root of everything, and we need not talk of progress and testimony; we need not talk of anything, if we have not begun with this purpose, that we should be "CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF THE SON OF GOD."

BOTH LORD AND CHRIST.

"THEREFORE let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts ii. 36). This verse gives the great issue between God and the world. It is not now a question of law keeping. Every one of us is born into the world with a nature that cannot please God. "They that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. viii. 8). "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. xi. 6). "The carnal mind is enmity against God" (Rom. viii. 7). Man is not upon his trial; he has been tried, tried for four thousand years previous to the coming of the Son of God into the world. The trial is past, the sentence is pronounced —"he that believeth not is condemned already" (John iii. 18)—and is only awaiting execution.

The question at issue now is concerning "His dear Son" (Col. i. 13). The charge

to the Jews was, "Ye crucified Him; God made Him Lord and Christ."

But some one may say, "I am not guilty of having crucified the Lord of Glory, that was the work of the Jew." It is remarkable that in the gospel records of the events which preceded the crucifixion of the Lord, we have distinctly portrayed the action of the *Jews* and the action of the *Gentiles*. The Jews said "He was a blasphemer" (Matt. xxvi. 65). The Jews said that "He ought to die" (John xix. 7). The Jews cried, "Away with Him, He is not fit to live" (John xix. 15). The Gentiles put a crown of thorns upon His head (Matt. xxvii. 29); the Gentiles arrayed Him in a mock royal robe (Matt. xxvii. 28); the Gentiles put a reed in His hand in mockery of a sceptre (Matt. xxvii. 29); the Gentiles bowed the knee to Him, smote Him on the cheek, spat upon Him (Matt. xxvii. 29, 30). The Gentile world joined hands with the Jews. The Jew said He was an impostor; the Gentile offered Him mock worship; there was no reality in it. Are there not many to-day who say, "Away with Him" during their working

hours, "Away with Him" during their leisure hours, "Away with Him" from their enjoyments, from their companionships, their intercourse? Give Him mock worship on Sunday for an hour, but "away with Him" at every other time? Is not that the Gentile way of rejecting Christ?

God is jealous as to His Son. His purpose in this dispensation is to honour Him, as we have it in the parable, "a certain King made a marriage for His Son" (Matt. xxii.). God is gathering out a people to form a Bride for His beloved Son. Meantime, judgment is hanging over the world, and the dark thunder-cloud is ready to burst. We know that God told Noah that He was going to bring a flood of waters, but He did not tell him when. And God has told us that "He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead" (Acts xvii. 31) and set Him at His own right hand on high.

The controversy is not settled. The

world has murdered God's Son, and each one must take sides either with the world that rejected and murdered Him, or with the murdered One. That is the first great issue between God and man.

Pass on now to Acts x. 36, "The Word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (He is Lord of all)." In addressing the Gentiles Peter brings in the same great truth, "He is Lord of all." He is not only Lord of Israel, He is Lord of the Gentiles as well. God has set Him at His own right hand, and given Him "all authority" (Matt. xxviii).

Look now at a passage or two showing this, "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand" (John iii. 35). That was the testimony of John the Baptist. Wonderful testimony!

If you have never studied the subject, read at your leisure what John the Baptist preached, and you will find that he preached every fundamental doctrine of the Gospel concerning Christ. He tells us of His eternal glory, of His being "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world"

(John i. 29), of His being anointed with the Holy Ghost, the One into whose hands God had delivered all things, the One who was to "baptise with the Holy Ghost and with fire" (Matt. iii. 11). I do not think any one ever had a more divine view of the glories of the Person and of the work of Christ than John the Baptist. None of the disciples, until after the descent of the Holy Ghost, had anything like such a view of the glory of Christ.

Then look at John xvii. 2, "As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him," and John xiii. 3, 4 "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God; He riseth from supper, and laid aside His garments; and took a towel, and girded Himself."

Notice also where the Lord Jesus says in Matthew xi. 27, "All things are delivered unto Me of My Father," as if the Father had just entrusted everything to Him, and in every instance the result is that He is working in grace and using His authority

in blessing. In chapter xvii. all flesh is given into His hands, that He may give eternal life to as many as God has given Him. In chapter xiii., "Knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands," He rises from supper, and instead of that glory, honour, and authority being used to assert His Lordship, He girds Himself, pours water into a basin, and begins to wash His disciples' feet. In the greatness of the authority committed to Him He stoops down to do the most menial service; yea, His purpose in accepting the authority was that He might use it for the glory of His Father, and for blessing to the world and to His own.

Look next at Romans xiv. 7-9: "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living."

The Lord Jesus tells us that when

Jehovah spoke out of the burning bush to Moses, and said, "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" (Acts vii. 32), it shows they all lived to Him, for He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. So the Lord Jesus is Lord, not only of the living but also of the dead. They all live to Him. In the theology of the blessed Lord there was no such thing as annihilation. He is "Lord both of the *dead* and living." "Whether we live therefore, or *die*, we are the Lord's." Living or dying we are His. The result of His death and of His resurrection is that He has absolute authority over the living and over the dead.

Perhaps some one inquires, what does He do with the dead who believe in Him? "Absent from the body, present with the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 8). "To depart and to be with Christ, which is very far better" (Phil. i. 23). To the saint who falls asleep, the Lordship of Christ, which He has purchased by His death, is exercised in this way. He takes them to be more blessedly near Him, and into closer realised

union with Himself than He could impart to them anywhere on the earth. He uses His authority in blessing.

Observe that He died that He might be Lord both of the dead and living. He is Lord of the living, He is Lord of the dead, He is Lord of the heathen, He is Lord of the unsaved, He is Lord of the Christ rejecter and the blasphemer, He is Lord of all. God has made that same Jesus, crucified by the world, Lord of all.

Then look at another passage in Romans ix. 5: "Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever." Here not only the Lordship of Christ, but the Deity of Christ is asserted. "Of whom as *concerning the flesh* Christ came." What is the meaning of that expression, "concerning the flesh?" If a child is born into the world we simply say that a child was born of such and such parents in such and such a place, and there is nothing more about it; but here is a person born of Israel according to the flesh, but the eternal Son of God. He was the "child *born*," but the

"Son *given*" (Isa. ix. 6)—the Son that was in the bosom of the Father given, but also the child born Man as well as God. "Over all, blessed for ever."

Exalted to the place of absolute authority, Joseph's first concern is for his own people. He sees that they lack for nothing. What is the first concern of our Joseph, who is exalted to "the right hand of the throne on high?" (Heb. viii. 1). His own people. He cares for you and me, who have put our trust in Him. We lack nothing. He has opened the storehouses for us, He has given us His flesh to eat (John vi. 51), we have "tasted that the Lord is gracious" (1 Peter ii. 3), and now He exercises all His authority, which extends to heaven and earth, in blessing, in care, in providing for us. Nothing can happen to us without His will. Not a hand or a foot can be lifted against us without the permission of our Joseph, whom "God hath made both Lord and Christ."

After storing up the corn during the seven years of plenty, Joseph secured first the money, then the cattle and the lands, then

the people themselves. "And Joseph said unto the people, Behold, I have bought you this day and your land for Pharaoh. . . . And they said, Thou hast saved our lives: let us find grace in the sight of my Lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants" (Gen. xlvii. 23-25).

Thus Egypt not only belonged to Pharaoh as king, but the people were bought for Pharaoh; they were his by the right of kingship, but also his by double right; for he had bought them, and through Joseph preserved their lives. This is a truth that men are very apt to be blind to. In the second epistle of Peter we read of the days coming when men shall deny the Lord "that bought them" (2 Peter ii. 1). The Lord Jesus has bought the world for His Father, and the world belongs to Him. He has not yet asserted His claim upon it; the time has not yet come for Him to ask of His Father "the heathen for His inheritance" (Psa. ii. 8). But the field in which the treasure was hid has been purchased (Matt. xiii. 44). The field (*i.e.*, the world) belongs to Christ. The world belongs to God by the double right, not only

of *creation*, but also of *redemption*. Therefore those who are "denying the Lord that bought them," denying the Deity of Christ, denying His authority, denying the truth of His Word, denying the One to whom they belong, they will have to give account to Him for it. How solemn!

You observe that Joseph purchased the whole for Pharaoh. We do not read that he did anything for himself. He bought it all for Pharaoh. He establishes the throne of Pharaoh and the right of Pharaoh over the whole land. He cares for his own brethren and for his father; he sees they lack for nothing, but for himself he claims nothing. So it is with our Lord Jesus Christ. In John xvii. the Lord said to His Father, "Glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee." He does not want to be glorified in order to display His own glory, but only that He may glorify His Father. He has no other object. He exercises all His authority for blessing to the world, and for blessing to His own in order that His Father may be glorified.

How do our hearts respond to this? He is our Lord. What are His claims upon us? Lordship implies that He has a right to order as He pleases, the right to do with us as seems to Him best. Just as Joseph took some people "from one end of the borders of Egypt even to the other" (Gen. xlvii. 21) the Lord has the right to decide what we shall do, where we shall live, where we may go, He has the absolute right. He says of John, "If I will, . . . tarry till I come" (John xxi. 22). He turns to Peter and says, "When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not. This spake He, signifying by what death he should glorify God" (John xxi. 18). "If I will" that Peter die a martyr for My Name's sake: "If I will" that John tarry till I come, what have you to do with that? Can't I do as I will with my own?

He has the absolute proprietorship of every one of us. We are His if we die, we are

His, living. The spirit departs to be "with Him" (Phil. i. 23), and the body returns unto dust, but every particle is precious to Him. Living or dying we belong to Him (Rom. xiv. 8), and the fact that all authority in heaven and earth is put into His hands is our absolute security against all the powers of darkness, against all that the world can do, against all accidents, disappointments, and vexations that embitter life.

Alas, instead of our submitting to His will, how pride rises up and introduces bitterness into life! How self-will asserts itself and struggles to get its own way against the will of Him who is our Lord! If we only knew the blessedness of letting Him direct us, if we only trusted in His protection, then we need not fear anything that can come—life or death itself, it is all one. It is His will, and "all authority in heaven and earth is given to Him" (Matt. xxviii. 18).

This truth of Christ being Lord is a special one for the individual. But you notice it is also said in Acts ii. 36 "that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye

have crucified, both Lord *and Christ*." The word Christ means the Anointed. It is the very same as the Hebrew word Messiah, which word specially connected the Coming One with Israel. He was the Lord's anointed. In early days the king was anointed to his office, the priests to their office, and in some instances the prophets also. So the Lord Jesus Christ is the Anointed One—Prophet, Priest, and King. He is Israel's King; He is the King of the Jews. We get the word "king" in hymns and poetry again and again; it rhymes well with a great many other words, but He is never in Scripture called King of the Church. The thought of the relationship of the Lord Jesus Christ to us as individuals is not "our king," for that implies nationality, but "our Lord."

He is the King of Israel, the King of the Jews. It was inscribed above the cross, and He will come again as the King of the Jews. Meantime, what is the relationship to Him that we bear as Christians? Look at 1 Corinthians xii. 3, "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost." It is an individual confessing that Jesus is the

Lord. We read of many coming and saying, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy Name?" (Matt. vii. 22). It is easy to say "Lord" with the lip, but no man can say from the heart and practically in his life that Jesus Christ is Lord but by the Holy Spirit; for it is only by the quickening power of the Holy Spirit that any man can acknowledge the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thus you have first the fact that He is Lord in verse 3, but in verse 12 we read, "For as the Body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one Body, being many, are one Body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit were we all baptised into one Body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. For the Body is not one member, but many."

The title "Christ" brings in the thought of a Body, a Head, and members. Christ the Head, we, who believe on Him, the members, "all baptised by one Spirit into One Body." It is not the Head only, but Head and members together that constitute "*the*

Christ." That is the relationship He bears to us. As Head of the Body He is the LORD. He has purchased us. We are His by His death and resurrection. He is JESUS, the personal Saviour; He is CHRIST, the one by whom we are all baptised into one Body. That is something nearer than Lordship; it is Head and members. It means that He feels every pain, every insult, every reproach that is cast upon His members. It means that the members are as necessary to the Head as the Head is to the members. It means that Christ, the Head, and the feeblest member of His Body are necessary to the completeness of God's purpose.

"God hath made that same Jesus both Lord and Christ." And He has brought us into union with that Christ. If I want to see in the Old Testament any prediction of the hope and the glory of "the Church, which is His Body," I have to look and see what the Old Testament scriptures say about the Head; and if the Head is to reign, then the Body reigns with Him. If the Head is reproached and suffers on earth,

the members suffer with Him. Is the Head to be glorified by God in the coming age? Then the members are to be glorified with Him. Christ connects Himself with all His members.

This is a very practical truth, for it brings in all God's redeemed—all "One Body," and links up every member, for we read, "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another" (Eph. iv. 25). Why am I not to tell a lie? Is it because it is a sin? Well, it is a sin, and a grievous sin; therefore, I am not to do it. But that is not the reason given here, but "for we are members one of another." Does my right hand ever try to deceive my left, or my left ever do any harm to my right? No! They are "members one of another." They are not merely connected with the Head, they are connected one with another. Every believer is a fellow-member with every other believer, and therefore love comes in, and nothing should be said or done that would injure the other, for "we are members one of another."

Then look at Romans xii. 4, 5, "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members *one of another.*" Not only of the Head, but also "one of another." Hence He goes on to say, "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us" (Rom. xii. 6).

All this, you will notice, is connected with the truth of the Head and the Body. Ministry is connected with the Head and the members in every passage. Some people think we have no responsibility towards those that do not belong to the special assembly with which we are connected. They say, "these are outsiders, and we have no responsibility toward them." We are indeed responsible, first, to do them no harm, and next, to exercise every gift we have for their benefit as far as in our power, because they are members of Christ, and because they and we are members "one of another."

Next take Ephesians iv. 15: "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up

into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ." You see how the Name Christ is always brought in in connection with membership of the Body: "From whom the whole Body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth." It is not all supplied by "the minister," it is not all supplied by one member: "According to the effectual working in the measure of every part." Every one of us ought to be effectually working for the good and the blessing of the whole, "making increase of the Body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Eph. iv. 16). Here again the whole subject of ministry is connected with the Headship of Christ and the membership of the Body. Take Colossians ii. 19: "Not holding the Head, from which all the Body by joints and hands having nourishment ministered, and knit together." I am afraid a great deal of what is called ministry nowadays is not "nourishment" at all, but chaff, and the result is not "knitting together," but separating and splitting up.

I want you to notice specially that whether it be in Romans, Corinthians, Ephesians, or

Colossians, it is Christ the Head, and the members one with Him and of one another, and these are the passages that teach us about ministry in the Church.

In looking through the Scriptures you see what a broad practical truth is the Lordship of Christ. My responsibility as united to Him, the Head of one Body, extends to the whole membership of that Body. I cannot reach them all, but my business is to go wherever I can go with a good conscience and an open Bible, because "we are members one of another." Realising that we are "baptised by one Spirit into One Body," I will endeavour "to keep the unity of the Spirit" (Eph. iv. 3). It will only be an endeavour, but let me do nothing either to alienate, or to separate, or to make it appear that I do not belong to the same Body as other believers—that is, the Body of Christ.

The very fact that Jesus Christ is Lord necessitates that we act in relation to every member of the Body as He has instructed us to act; to seek their blessing, and their blessing only, in the way in which He has taught us in His Holy Word.

"Both Lord and Christ." He is Lord of all. He is Lord of the world, that belongs to Him, but He is our Lord, who have acknowledged His dominion. The question is, Shall it be real? Shall it be calling Him Lord in the heart and owning His authority over us, or only owning Him with the lip?

May the Holy Spirit enable us practically to acknowledge Him, whom God has given. That He is the Absolute One to control all my ways, that I have to give an account to Him at His judgment-seat, and that meantime He is exercising all His authority in the way of blessing to every one who trusts in Him.

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